

GOD'S REVENGE



By the Bookellers

M.DCC.LXXXIX

GOD'S REVENGE



By the Bookellers

M.DCC.LXXXIX

GOD's REVENGE

AGAINST

Murder and Adultery :

REMARKABLY DISPLAYED IN

THIRTY TRAGICAL HISTORIES:

S H E W I N G
The Justice and Power of DIVINE PROVIDENCE in
punishing such atrocious Offences.

T H E W H O L E
Extremely interesting, entertaining, and instructive ; very necessary to deter and
restrain us from giving a Loose to our Passions and irregular Appetites.
Each History introduced with a COPPER PLATE, representing
the most striking Passages.

A N E W E D I T I O N,
Revised and corrected, with a Recommendatory PREFACE,
By the Rev. PHILIP BATTESON, B. A.

*As the Shadow follows the Substance, so does Punishment the Crime ; they never lose Sight
of each other ; for Conscience keeps up the Remembrance ; so that it may be said of those
who take Pleasure in Wickedness, from Sin to Justice ; from Justice to Judgment ; from
Judgment to Execution ; and from thence to the Tribunal of that GOD, whose Com-
mandments they broke, and whose Goodness they trampled on.*

St. AMBROSE.

L O N D O N :
Printed for T. AXTELL, at the ROYAL EXCHANGE ; and Sold by
all the Booksellers.

M.DCC.LXXIX.

GOD'S REVENGE

AGAINST

MURDER AND ADULTERY:

REMARKABLY DISPLAYED IN

THIRTY TRAGICAL HISTORIES.

BY THE AUTHOR

The Justice and Mercy of Divine Providence in
punishing the atrocious Offences



Extremely interesting, and highly instructive, in
reference to the principles of justice and mercy.

Each History introduced with a General Preface, representing
the most striking passages.

A NEW EDITION

Revised and corrected, with a New Introduction, by

the Rev. PHILIP BATTISON, M.A.

As the divine justice is displayed in the punishment of the
murderer, and the mercy in the forgiveness of the
adulterer, these two crimes are the most proper subjects for
tragic representation, and the most instructive to the
human mind.

ST. ANDREW'S

LONDON

Printed for T. AXTON, at the Royal Exchange, and sold by
all the Booksellers.

MDCCLXXIX.

P R E F A C E.

MURDER, when coolly and deliberately committed, argues a Mind lost, averse to all Sentiments of Goodness; a mind malicious, fierce, daringly and inflexibly wicked, and trampling upon all the common and most amiable ties of nature and justice. It was, therefore, wisely appointed, that murderers should be punished with Death, by a particular, by a positive sanction of the Almighty.

MEN, in other respects, extremely dissolute in their morals, who make but little scruple of theft and robbery, are shocked and terrified at the very suggestion of a Murder; and frequently even Murderers themselves, find that they are surrounded with heart-corroding and never-ceasing terrors. Their peace of mind is irrecoverably lost, together with their innocence. They experience a settled gloom, which all their art, all their subterfuges and amusements can never dissipate, and through which not one beam of solid and true comfort can pervade. They are hourly disquieted by distractions from within, and apprehensions of danger from without. Darkness and solitude start and excite new horrors; and even in their dreams, the guilty imagination is often restless and tormenting itself, exhibiting

dismal

dismal and unnatural scenes of blood and cruelty, and haunted to such a degree of pale, melancholic, ghastly, and terrifying spectres, as has occasioned agonies of dread and amazement: spectres so strongly painted, and with such natural and lively terror, that even the waking sense has been still inclined to think them real. Hence it results, that scarcely any Murder, however secretly committed, hath gone un-detected: of this there has been most fearful examples within the experience of all ages.

THE Sacred pages inform us of the Murder of Abel by Cain, through Envy; of Uriah, by David, for Adultery; of Abner, by Joab, for Ambition; of Naboth, by Jezabel, for Avarice; and of Jehu's sons, by Athaliah, for revenge.

THOUGH these are instances sufficient to dissolve any Christian heart with pity, yet, of late years, such execrable murders have been perpetrated among ourselves, as for the deliberate execution, the steadiness and unconcern of the criminals, and the most incredible circumstances of barbarity attending them, as if cruelty, and a savage disposition, were gaining ground upon us, and we were more and more lost to all sense of benevolence and compassion.

To stem the torrent of so heinous a crime, to point out the different vices which so imperceptibly lead to it; to evince the extraordinary and inevitable detection of the perpetrators, is the design of the following work. The histories related herein are founded upon fact, and though transacted in foreign parts, have been too nearly copied in this kingdom: though

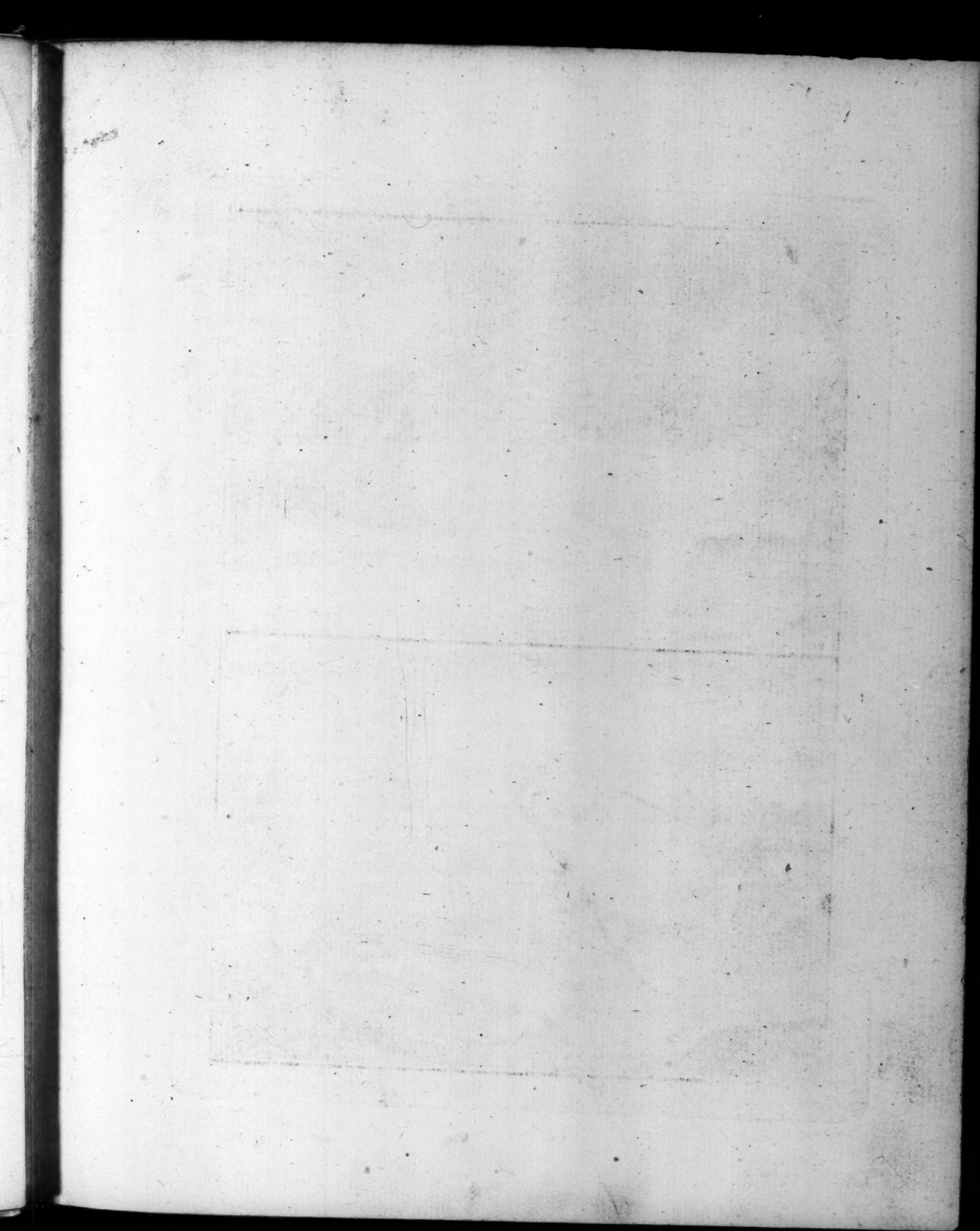
though for the honour of our nation, it must be observed, that those murders committed by our countrymen, are seldom marked with such horrible circumstances of cruelty and cool barbarity, as those which are perpetrated by foreigners.

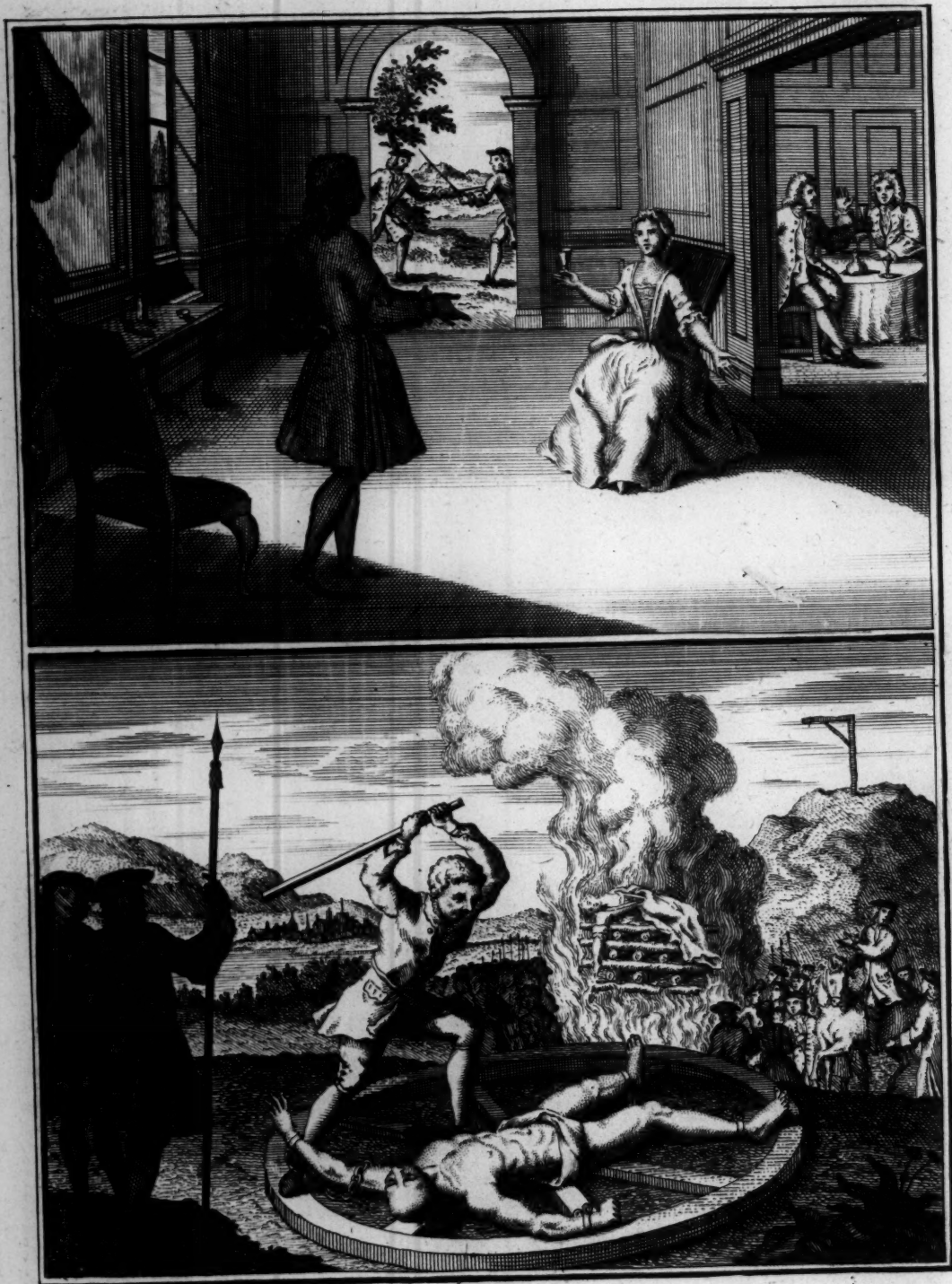
THOUGH there be many, who would in the calm hours of inward reflection, startle at the bare suggestion of their being capable of plunging into such an abyss of depravity, and reply as Hazael did to the prophet Elijah, *What, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing!* i. e. actuated by brutal passions, and bereft of all the kind and tender feelings of humanity, that he should commit so vile an enormity as this? Yet notwithstanding this generous and honest resentment at such an imputation, it cannot be amiss to to have our horror excited afresh, and improved to a still greater height; because there have been examples of persons who thought themselves invincibly fortified against every temptation of this kind, who have been betrayed and led gradually to such an utter stupidity of mind, with respect to the moral sense, as not to stick at the shedding of human blood. This, when traced in its several stages of progression, will not appear marvellous or incomprehensible, but to result from the stated course of nature, which contains an uniform train of consequences in its *perversions*, as well as in its improvements. For as the pursuit of good naturally leads to improvement in virtue, so vice, which is an extravagance, must, the further we proceed in it, lead us to greater extravagancies, and greater vices. Thus we see Adultery closed with scenes of bloodshed. Hence furious, precipitate and ungoverned passions, so frequently end in Murder: and that luxury, or the pride of elegant distinction and splendid appearance

appearance above our rank and circumstances, produces perplexity and distress in our affairs, which, reason being unable to subdue our pride, puts us upon indirect courses to supply our necessities; and our indirect courses, within the shelter of the law failing, we must have some other resource to support our extravagance. We are then, perhaps, hurried on to such violent invasions of our neighbour's right, as all well-regulated societies, from motives of self-preservation, must devote to infamy and exemplary punishment. Should it now happen, that from being personally known, or from the danger of a public alarm or close pursuit being raised, that the thought of a Murder is suggested, what security have we against the commission of this unnatural crime?

ALL this demonstrates the utility of a publication of this kind; because while excess of pleasure, and excess of pride and passion prevail, we are by no means out of danger. It is not the mere resolution of an offender that may be depended upon to save him, when the connection of his present vices, with other future ones, will probably be an overmatch for such a resolution,

WE have therefore need of such narratives as these, which convey astonishment to our thoughts, and terror to our senses; that beholding, as in a mirror, the dreadful examples of those who have been induced by ambition, wrath, adultery, avarice, and a variety of other vices, to imbrue their hands in human blood, we may crush them in embryo, and be able to steer clear of those rocks and shelves, on which too many of our species have suffered shipwreck, and been drowned in the ocean of perdition.



Hist. I.

GOD'S REVENGE

AGAINST

MURDER and ADULTERY.

HISTORY.

ARGUMENT.

Hautefelia maliciously calumniates the virtuous Mermанда, her Brother Grand Pre's Wife, which occasions a Duel between him and Baron Betanford. The Success not answering her base Views, she bribes Fresnay, a villanous Apothecary, to poison Mermанда; which done, she insinuates to her own Husband, Malleray, who was Mermанда's Brother, that Grand-Pre was the Murderer. He thereupon sends him a Challenge. They fight, and Malleray is killed. Grand-Pre procures his Pardon, and Hautefelia gets him poisoned also by Fresnay, who, being condemned for a Rape, confesses himself guilty of both those Murders, at Hautefelia's Instigation. She is apprehended, and, on her Confession, executed.

M. De Grand-Mont, a worthy French gentleman, nobly descended, and of a good estate, had his seat near Auxone, a strong and ancient town, on the borders of Burgundy, and Franche-Compté. His virtuous lady was the only daughter of a very honourable gentleman of Dole, a noble city in Franche-Compté, whose name was M. de Buferat. Long did this happy

and loving pair enjoy all the pleasure and content which earth could afford, or their hearts desire: for, as on one side they were so prosperous, that their wealth and possessions were daily augmenting; so, on the other, they were blessed with three hopeful sons, named Grand-Pre, Ville-neuve, and Masseron, with two fair daughters, Hautefelia and Cressie, a promising posterity. None would have ima-

B

gined,

gined, but that this one family might have produced many, especially as even the youngest of these five children had nearly attained to maturity. But it was otherwise decreed, as will soon appear.

Grand-Pre, the eldest of all, being martially disposed, prevailed on his father to let him serve in the wars, under that renowned Maurice of Nassau, afterwards Prince of Orange. Villeneuve, delighting in books, was sent to Pont-au-Mousson, in order to compleat his studies; and Masseron was, for his beauty, begged for a page by a Marshal of France. Haute-felia only remained at home; her parents having presented Cressie, their youngest daughter, to a great Burgundian lady, who was afterwards the afflicted wife and mother of the famous Barons De Luz, both deprived of life, by that memorable Lorrain Prince, M. de Guise.

But behold the inconstancy of fortune! Within the compass of one year, three of these children are in their graves. Villeneuve, bathing in a river, was drowned; Masseron was killed in a duel, by one Rossier, a Gascoign, at Fontainebleau; Haute-felia died of a fever: a triple loss, which inexpressibly affect their Parents; who, thus suddenly deprived of three, determine on recalling home their remaining two children, to be props and comforts to their old age: yet were their hopes sadly deceived.

First came Cressie, whom we must hence forwards stile Mademoiselle Haute-felia, as now bearing the title of her late elder sister, according to the custom of France, which fair young lady has a great and bloody part to act upon the theatre of this history. Soon afterwards arrived Grand-Pre from Holland, where, in divers ser-

vices, he left many honourable testimonies of his valour.

On his arrival, the nobility and gentry of those quarters thronged to congratulate his safe return, and condole with him the untimely deaths of his brothers and sister. They find him a compleat, gallant cavalier, not in outward pride and vanity of equipage or dress; but in the perfections and endowments of his mind and body. He is wholly addicted to manly exercises, and not to the arts of gallantries and amours: his delights are in the fields of Mars and Bellona, not in the palaces of Venus and Cupid; well knowing that those will bring him honour and glory, these shame and repentance.

His father, apprehensive lest this martial disposition of his might induce him to seek wars abroad, as there was then none at home, proffers him the choice of many rich and beautiful damsels; but Grand-Pre is deaf to all such propositions, and seems utterly averse to marriage. To remedy this, the old gentleman resolves on quitting the country, in order to fix his residence at Dijon, the capital of Burgundy, hoping that there, among the multitudes of beauties in that renowned city, his son might cast his eyes on some one paragon of Nature's, whose charms would be capable of captivating his affection. The event answered his expectation.

One Sunday morning in Lent, as Grand-Pre was at the royal chapel, whither he went to hear father Justinian, a celebrated Capuchin preacher, just opposite to his seat he spies a most lovely young lady, tall, slender, a quick eye, delicately clear complexion, fine flaxen tresses; exceeding rich in apparel, yet infinitely

more

more so in the excellencies of her beautiful person. In a word, she was so completely amiable, that at the very sight of her, our gallant, not accustomed to such enchanting objects, and such sudden emotions of the spirits, could not refrain from altering his countenance, nor restrain his raptured heart from panting in his bosom.

Nor was it long before this charmer of his faculties, took notice how eagerly she was gazed on, by a person whom she knew not; but observed to be a fine proper gentleman, nobly apparelled and attended. She could not help dying her lily cheeks with a rosy vermillion blush, which gave her such additional graces, and so enflamed poor Grand-Pre, that he was no longer able to resist the violent influence of such powerful assaults. And now, for the first time, his stubborn heart does homage to beauty: he now retracts his former opinions conceived against the power of almighty love, and holds them for erroneous and heterodox.

But if the gallant finds himself bound in the fetters of this young damsel's beauty, she is no less ensnared in those of his graceful personage, only she is modest in her outward behaviour: for, as he cannot keep his eyes from gazing at her, she seems to steal now and then a glance; or, if she chances to transgress that decorum, she instantly, in external appearance, checks her looks from ranging beyond the limits of decency and decorum.

Now, to the grief of our new lovers, the Sermon ends, and all prepare to depart. Grand-Pre is doubly perplexed; first, for being so soon deprived of this lovely object of his soul's desires; and next, on account of his not knowing who she is. But, having taken a turn or two

in the church, under this anxiety, beckoning his page, and shewing her to him, he orders him to make secret enquiry of her name and habitation. The page soon returns and acquaints him, that the lady he sent him to ask about, is Mademoiselle Mermanda, daughter of M. de Cressonville, first president of the parliament of Dijone. Our gallant is extremely rejoiced at this intelligence, and more so, as he sees it no disparagement to his family, if he sought her in marriage, which he then absolutely determined on, notwithstanding his former anti-matrimonial resolutions.

Accordingly, next morning, taking with him two gentlemen his intimates, he repairs to Cressonville's house, where, the President himself being abroad, while his friends entertain the mother, (he under colour of other conference) courts the daughter, whom he now likes and loves better than before, if possible; as he finds the excellencies of her mind answerable to those of her person: and such was the effect of this interview, that if he thinks himself divinely happy in a mistress, she is no less proud of having found such a deserving servant.

Grand-Pre, thus satisfied with the courteous reception he met with from his beloved Mermanda, acquaints first his own father, and then her's with the situation of his affections, and leaves the old gentlemen to concert matters, while he assiduously continues his addresses to herself.

Cressonville is far from disapproving the proposal; but has also a son, and Grand-Mont a daughter, both as yet unprovided for, he is extremely desirous that this may be a double match, thereby to contract a firmer league between the two houses. This being proposed and debated among

all the parties concerned, it finally takes effect, and after all requisite preparations, the marriages between Monsieur Grand-Pre, and Mademoiselle Mermenda; Monsieur Malleray, and Mademoiselle Hautevelia, were solemnized at Dijon, with a splendour and magnificence suitable to the persons. Hymen, indeed, was not invited to these festivities, and if he had, he would have refused to come; neither was the goddess Lucina present, as well knowing, alas! that those fair and youthful brides would not live to need her assistance.

But behold all these rejoicings are soon converted into sorrow and affliction. Pride and malice reign no where so triumphant as in a female breast. Hautevelia is not satisfied with her situation, though all the world thought she had little occasion of dissatisfaction. She envies Mermenda's, as not brooking to yield her the upper hand, knowing she was by birth her inferior. She prefers a scarlet cloak to a black one; a swordsman to a penman, and contemns her loving husband, purely because he has not nobility as well as wealth and merit; so this couple agree but indifferently.

On the contrary, no married pair ever passed the first year more delightfully than did the generous Grand-Pre and his lovely Mermenda; inasmuch that their endearing deportment towards each other met the applause of all witnesses, Hautevelia alone excepted. Her sister-in-law's reputation and prosperity are daggers in her envious, ambitious heart, and she seriously begins to study means how she may eclipse the radiancy of her glory. She mischievously recollects, that Baron Betanford, a gallant cavalier, whose seat lay

not far from Auxone, was pretty intimate with her brother Grand-Pre, and often visited him; as also, that this Baron had lately done her two discourtesies; one, in buying a jewel, for which she had offered money at Dijon fair; the other, in retaining a little dog of her's, picked up by his page. So, breathing nothing but malice and revenge, she hopes to give two strokes with one stone, and to wreck her vengeance at once both on the Baron and Mermenda.

Judge now what trivial motives this inconsiderate woman had for such direful malice against these innocent persons! But she is resolute in her pernicious purposes; and as she has laid the foundation, she will perfect the edifice. In order thereto, she dispatches away a servant to Grand-Pre, at their father's seat near Auxone, with a letter, wherein she desires him to ride over to her, she having a secret to reveal of such importance, that she will not trust it upon Paper, and withal to frame some other excuse to her husband, for his sudden coming.

Grand-Pre rode to Dijon, where he is welcomed by his brother-in-law and sister. Her he observes to be much more gloomy than usual, but cannot guess whence arises these clouds of her discontent; but he too soon will learn the secret. Supper ended, they all three walked in the garden, and have some general discourse; when being conducted to his chamber, Malleray, wishing him good repose, departs, and the base Hautevelia, with Syren's tears, informs him, "That she knows of a certainty, that Baron Betanford is so much too familiar with his wife Mermenda, that he actually carries on with her a criminal conversation; the which she

" could

"could not but disclose to him, because his honour is her's, which, as she is by nature bound, she will cherish as her own life." Such is his amazement at these unexpected tidings, that he stands a while like one stupified. The next moment becomes like one raving mad: he storms, stamps, throws himself now on the bed, then on the floor, and had not Hautevelia seasonably prevented it, he would have fallen on his sword. Terrible effects of jealousy! And now this execrable sister, more through policy than charity, uses many persuasions, and brings him somewhat to his senses: so they conclude to keep the affair inviolably secret; withal Grand-Pre vows to be severely revenged on the adulterers.

Hautevelia having thus broached her villainy, laughing in her sleeve, betakes herself to rest, leaving her too credulous brother, not to sleep, but to wear away the night in torturing anxieties; who in the morning, earlier than his accustomed hour, rises, takes leave, and rides home, extremely pensive and sorrowful.

Mermanda runs to meet him, finds him sad, enquires the cause: she intreats him, that if any mischance has befallen him, she may participate, and bear her half share of his discontent, as she does of his joy and prosperity, and as she was wont to do, proffers to kiss him. But he slights her, and very unkindly puts her from him; whereat she is amazed, as not being used to such treatment. After supper, jealousy having been his chief dish, and grief her's, he takes a few melancholy turns in the courtyard, and then sends a page to call his lady. Fluctuating between sorrow and comfort, hope and despair, she comes immediately. He asks her, if she will

walk with him? She answers, "His will shall ever be her's, and that she is ready to wait on him, joyfully and willingly, when or wheresoever he pleases." He conducts her to a solitary grove, and there, with fury in his countenance, lightening in his eyes, and thunder on his tongue, he charges her with disloyalty with Baron Betanford.

Poor Mermanda, pierced to the heart with this thunder-bolt, sinks down into a swoon, from which her husband has much ado to recover her. Being come to herself, she, with many sighs and tears, condemns his credulity, terms her accusers worse than devils, invokes heaven and earth to bear witness for her, solemnly protesting, that she is wholly innocent; and that in particular, by her part in paradise, Baron Betanford had never made the least attempt upon her, or even opened his mouth to make any such dishonourable motion.

Grand-Pre, well weighing her words, behaviour, and bitter agony, gives credit to all she said, and so frees both her and the Baron from this scandalous imputation. He begs her to pardon him, vows he will love her more than ever, and bury the very memory of all this in perpetual oblivion.

But yet Mermanda is still vexed in mind. She finds it easy to admit grief, but difficult to expel it. She knows not of whom to seek advice, under this perplexity. She well foresees, that if the Baron should visit her husband as usual, that gentleman's presence must needs revive and confirm his jealousy, though they were both spotless as innocence itself. She thinks, therefore, on writing Betanford a request, to refrain his visits: but then she is apprehensive

henfive her so doing will be deemed too great a presumption, or at least indiscretion, and that it might come to her husband's knowledge, either by her letter's being intercepted, or otherwise. However, dreading his coming, and encouraged by a consciousness of her own innocence, she determines to write, which she does to this purport :

MERMANDA'S *Letter to BETANFORD.*

" I T is not, Sir, with blushes only, but
" also with tears, that I now presume to
" write this; for in truth it grieves me to
" publish my husband's follies, which I am
" bound by duty to conceal; nor had I
" offered it, but that I am driven to it by
" mere necessity. For such is my case,
" that my unspotted chastity is not capable
" to exempt him from jealousy, which
" causes me as much to triumph in my
" own loyalty, as I grieve at his ingrati-
" tude. Nor is he content to wrong me
" alone; his folly, or rather his frenzy,
" reflects on yourself, whom he takes to
" be the object of my regards. But as
" your innocence can justify, warrant,
" and defend my honour, from the least
" shadow of that crime; so, that we may
" both endeavour rather to quench than
" inflame this his irregular passion, I must
" humbly beseech you to refrain our
" house, as also all familiarity with him;
" by which means, time may perhaps
" wear away from his thoughts what, at
" present, I fear truth and reason cannot
" effect. Your conspicuous virtues, and
" true generosity, assure me of this cour-
" tesy, which I will repay with thanks,
" and unfeigned prayers, that your days
" may be as infinite as your perfections,

" and your fame as glorious as your me-
" rits.

" " MERMANDA."

The Baron, on receipt of this, praises Mermanda's discretion, and laughs at Grand-Pre's folly, extols her virtue, and condemns his jealousy. He will be tender of a lady's honour, especially that of one so truly honourable as Mermanda. He before had proposed to visit Paris, but now this occasion hastens his resolution. So making ready for his journey to that metropolis, he takes coach and sets out; but before his departure, he returns the fair Mermanda this answer :

BETANFORD'S *Answer to MERMANDA.*

" Y OUR virtue, madam, and my
" conscience, render us as unwor-
" thy of your husband's jealousy, as he is
" of so chaste a wife as Mermanda, and
" so sincere a friend as Betanford: but as
" your affection to him has still shined in
" your loyalty, so must it now in your pa-
" tience; since he in this base passion of
" his, seeking his own shame, will at last
" as surely find out your glory. Had his
" folly revealed to me as much as I learn
" from your discreet letter, I would,
" sword in hand, with the hazard of my
" vital blood, have convinced both him
" and the world, how basely he has in-
" jured your innocence and my honour.
" Mean while, I obey your request, and
" shall so deport myself, with such due re-
" gard to your own virtue and my repu-
" tation, as I hope he shall rest satisfied
" on both our accounts. Be assured, ma-
" dam, that I prize ladies of your merit
" at so high a rate, and hold gallants of
" his humour and disposition in such low
" esteem, that I shall know how to an-
" swer

“fwer his indignation with scorn, and to
“requite your prudence with applaufe
“and admiration.

“BETANFORD.”

Mermanda receives this letter very joyfully; but her's to the Baron produces effects quite contrary to her hopes: for Grand-Pre hearing of Betanford's fudden departure for Paris, as jealousy abounds with eyes, fufpects a plot between him and his wife, and fo is confirmed in his former opinion of her difloyalty. His love to her is therefore turned into hatred; and to fhew her the fruits of his relapfe, he refuses her his bed, than which, to a virtuous, deferving wife, nothing can be more grievous and difguftful. Accordingly, this difcourteous ingratitude of his, fo afflicts poor Mermanda, that nothing upon earth feems capable of affording her any confolation, though fhe endeavours to ftifle and conceal her grief as much as poffible; but her wan cheeks and difcontented looks, as the outward heralds of her inward afflictions, do vifibly, though filently, fpeak her fentiments.

Grand-Mont and his wife, though they continually fee this alteration in their beloved daughter-in-law, yet they are utterly ignorant of the difference between their fon Grand-Pre and her. But the wicked Hautefelia, whose malice fleeps not, having her fpies in every corner of their houfe, is punctually informed of all thefe paffages, whereat fhe exceedingly triumphs and rejoices.

All this while Grand-Pre's breaft is boiling with implacable rage, and he is continually vowing bitter vengeance, firft on Betanford, next on his wife. With

this view, he pretends bufinefs at Chalons, and fo taking a choice horfe, one page, and two lackies, he quits home, paffing by indirect ways, firft to Troy, and thence to Brie-Count-Robert, (a day's journey from Paris) where, being private in his inn, he writes a challenge, and delivers it to his page, ordering him, at day-break, to poft away for Paris, to the crown of France, in St. Honore ftreet, to deliver that letter to Baron Betanford, and return poft the fame night with the Baron's answer.

The page executes his mafter's orders very punctually, and Betanford, on opening Grand-Pre's billet, finds thefe words:

GRAND-PRE's challenge to BETANFORD.

“YOU need no witnefs but yourfelf
“to inform you in how high a
“nature you have wronged me: herein
“your falfe glory has made my real
“fhame fo apparent, that I had rather
“die than live to digeft it. Not to dif-
“femble to you my resentment, as you
“have your friendship, know that I can
“fooner forget all other offences than
“pardon this. Think it not then ftrange,
“that I require you to meet me, next
“Thursday morning, between five and
“fix, with your rapier only, either on
“horfeback, or on foot, at Carency,
“half a league from Brie-Count-Robert,
“where the bearer hereof fhall expect
“you, fafely to conduct you to a fair
“meadow, where I will attend you
“with my furgeon, but no fecond. It
“is impoffible for me to accept any
“other fatisfaction; for to be plain
“with

"with you, your life or mine must decide this matter.

"GRAND-PRE."

So far was the Baron from shewing any sign of fear, or concern, at reading this, that he appeared very gay and pleasant; nay he obliged Grand-Pre's page to dine with him; which done, he took him aside and said, "Tell thy master, that I will not fail meeting him, on horseback, without a second, at the place and hour specified."—Early on the morrow, being Wednesday, he sends away a very fine horse, which his groom leads, and about ten, with only his surgeon and page, he takes coach and arrives that evening at Carency, where he lodges.

Next morning, the time appointed for their meeting, Grand-Pre, having dispatched away his page, pretending to go to Matins, hastes away to the field, attended only by a surgeon. Soon after him comes the Baron, conducted by Grand-Pre's page, with his surgeon only, having left his coach, page and groom, a furlong off, with a positive command, not to stir thence till they heard from him.

The two surgeons, in the stead of gentlemen-seconds, prepare, according to the rules and ceremonies of duels, to search the combatants for coats of mail, private arms, or the like: but they might well have spared that trouble and curiosity; for both the Cavaliers were too honourable to taint their characters with such cowardice or treachery: nay, to shew they scorned even the suspicion thereof, they had already thrown off all to their shirts. And now begins a combat as memorable as bloody, and performed with very uncommon dexterity and resolution.

They enter the field with a soft trot, having each his adversary in front, and when about eighty paces distant, they clap spurs to their steeds, and part like two flashes of lightning. At this first meeting, Grand-Pre runs Betanford thro' the left shoulder, and himself receives only a slight thrust, close under the right eye; and, being excellent horsemen, they turn short, and again fall to it with great bravery; in which encounter Betanford receives a wide gash on the brawn of his right arm, and Grand-Pre a thrust in his left side, which must infallibly have ended the dispute with his life, had not the rapier glanced on a rib: and now by consent they retire in order to breathe a little. They again come thundering on, when Betanford runs Grand-Pre through the neck, and is himself run through the small of his right arm, which wound, coming among the sinews and arteries, made him drop his sword, whereat he was exceedingly perplexed and amazed.

Here, perhaps, some base-minded patron, who had not been trained up in the school of honour, and consequently not deserving the title of a gentleman, would have laid hold on this advantage, as desiring no better occasion of dispatching his adversary. But Grand-Pre, whose generosity in this I commend, no less than I condemn his causeless jealousy, highly disdaining to sully his reputation with such infamy, rids Betanford of his apprehensions, with these words: "Courage, Baron; for I will rather die than wound a man unarmed." At the same time he calls out to his own surgeon, to deliver the Baron his sword. Betanford returns thanks for this courtesy, which he vows not to forget.

Now,

Now, though the blood rather pours than trickles from their wounds, yet are they so inflamed that they neither can nor will rest satisfied, but fall to it again as furiously as ever, and act wonders. Betanford has already received seven wounds, but has given ten to his antagonist. When their surgeons, grieving to see the condition they were in, agree to try if they could prevail on them to desist: so running hat in hand, they intreat them to give over, as having already given far more than sufficient proofs of their bravery, by performing even beyond what they thought men capable of doing; that it was a great pity, parents, prince and country, should be deprived of such valorous cavaliers, with more to the like effect. But they preach to the winds, and receive no other answer than sharp reprimands, for not knowing better what belonged to the duties of their function.

Again the combatants divide, and with fresh vigour and resolution again spur on their foaming horses; but this encounter proves far more favourable to the brave Betanford, than to his challenger: for, as Grand-Pre makes a desperate thrust at him, which passed under his right arm, without other effect than piercing his shirt, Betanford, with great force and dexterity, runs Grand-Pre through the belly into his reins, with which unfortunate hit, together with a false pace his horse then made, he is brought to the ground speechless, and, to all appearance, just ready to bid the world adieu.

Betanford, not doubting but that his gallant enemy's course was near finished, alights; and his surgeon thereupon cries out aloud, Dispatch him, Dispatch him: but this noble spirited Baron calls him

villain for his pains; and, throwing away hat and sword, runs with open arms to his assistance, in requital of his former courtesy in returning him his sword. Nay, he even seems to be more solicitous for the welfare of his antagonist, than for his own, sending away with all speed, his surgeon for his coach, raising up the half-expiring Grand-Pre, binding his wounds in the best manner he was able. The coach being come, he helps to lay him in as gently as possible, and mounting it, with the two surgeons, the pages and lackies attending, he drives away to the nearest farm-house, where he most earnestly requests the artists to use their utmost skill upon Grand-Pre, and before he would suffer them to examine his own hurts, he causes his to be opened. They both concur in opinion, that his last wound is mortal; when Betanford, still like himself, vows not to forsake him in that extremity. Having seen Grand-Pre laid to sleep, after dressing his wounds, he then had proper care taken of his own, none of which are found to be dangerous. His next orders are, that none of their Servants appear without doors, lest this affair should take vent; so all is hushed up very privately.

About noon, Grand-Pre having recovered his speech and memory, Betanford approaches his bed-side, hat in hand; when requiring all present to quit the room, he courteously salutes and comforts him, humbly requesting and conjuring him, as he is a gentleman, to tell him, why he had called him into the field. "Ah! Baron, cried Grand-Pre, swear first to me, on your honour, that you will truly resolve one question."—"By my honour and fidelity, replied Betanford, by my part of Paradise, I

D

"truly

"with you, your life or mine must decide this matter.

"GRAND-PRE."

So far was the Baron from shewing any sign of fear, or concern, at reading this, that he appeared very gay and pleasant; nay he obliged Grand-Pre's page to dine with him; which done, he took him aside and said, "Tell thy master, that I will not fail meeting him, on horseback, without a second, at the place and hour specified."—Early on the morrow, being Wednesday, he sends away a very fine horse, which his groom leads, and about ten, with only his surgeon and page, he takes coach and arrives that evening at Carency, where he lodges.

Next morning, the time appointed for their meeting, Grand-Pre, having dispatched away his page, pretending to go to Matins, hastes away to the field, attended only by a surgeon. Soon after him comes the Baron, conducted by Grand-Pre's page, with his surgeon only, having left his coach, page and groom, a furlong off, with a positive command, not to stir thence till they heard from him.

The two surgeons, in the stead of gentlemen-second, prepare, according to the rules and ceremonies of duels, to search the combatants for coats of mail, private arms, or the like: but they might well have spared that trouble and curiosity; for both the Cavaliers were too honourable to taint their characters with such cowardice or treachery: nay, to shew they scorned even the suspicion thereof, they had already thrown off all to their shirts. And now begins a combat as memorable as bloody, and performed with very uncommon dexterity and resolution.

They enter the field with a soft trot, having each his adversary in front, and when about eighty paces distant, they clap spurs to their steeds, and part like two flashes of lightning. At this first meeting, Grand-Pre runs Betanford thro' the left shoulder, and himself receives only a slight thrust, close under the right eye; and, being excellent horsemen, they turn short, and again fall to it with great bravery; in which encounter Betanford receives a wide gash on the brawn of his right arm, and Grand-Pre a thrust in his left side, which must infallibly have ended the dispute with his life, had not the rapier glanced on a rib: and now by consent they retire in order to breathe a little. They again come thundering on, when Betanford runs Grand-Pre through the neck, and is himself run through the small of his right arm, which wound, coming among the sinews and arteries, made him drop his sword, whereat he was exceedingly perplexed and amazed.

Here, perhaps, some base-minded patron, who had not been trained up in the school of honour, and consequently not deserving the title of a gentleman, would have laid hold on this advantage, as desiring no better occasion of dispatching his adversary. But Grand-Pre, whose generosity in this I commend, no less than I condemn his causeless jealousy, highly disdaining to sully his reputation with such infamy, rids Betanford of his apprehensions, with these words: "Courage, Baron; for I will rather die than wound a man unarmed." At the same time he calls out to his own surgeon, to deliver the Baron his sword. Betanford returns thanks for this courtesy, which he vows not to forget.

Now,

Now, though the blood rather pours than trickles from their wounds, yet are they so inflamed that they neither can nor will rest satisfied, but fall to it again as furiously as ever, and act wonders. Betanford has already received seven wounds, but has given ten to his antagonist. When their surgeons, grieving to see the condition they were in, agree to try if they could prevail on them to desist: so running hat in hand, they intreat them to give over, as having already given far more than sufficient proofs of their bravery, by performing even beyond what they thought men capable of doing; that it was a great pity, parents, prince and country, should be deprived of such valorous cavaliers, with more to the like effect. But they preach to the winds, and receive no other answer than sharp reprimands, for not knowing better what belonged to the duties of their function.

Again the combatants divide, and with fresh vigour and resolution again spur on their foaming horses; but this encounter proves far more favourable to the brave Betanford, than to his challenger: for, as Grand-Pre makes a desperate thrust at him, which passed under his right arm, without other effect than piercing his shirt, Betanford, with great force and dexterity, runs Grand-Pre through the belly into his reins, with which unfortunate hit, together with a false pace his horse then made, he is brought to the ground speechless, and, to all appearance, just ready to bid the world adieu.

Betanford, not doubting but that his gallant enemy's course was near finished, alights; and his surgeon thereupon cries out aloud, Dispatch him, Dispatch him: but this noble spirited Baron calls him

villain for his pains; and, throwing away hat and sword, runs with open arms to his assistance, in requital of his former courtesy in returning him his sword. Nay, he even seems to be more solicitous for the welfare of his antagonist, than for his own, sending away with all speed, his surgeon for his coach, raising up the half-expiring Grand-Pre, binding his wounds in the best manner he was able. The coach being come, he helps to lay him in as gently as possible, and mounting it, with the two surgeons, the pages and lackies attending, he drives away to the nearest farm-house, where he most earnestly requests the artists to use their utmost skill upon Grand-Pre, and before he would suffer them to examine his own hurts, he causes his to be opened. They both concur in opinion, that his last wound is mortal; when Betanford, still like himself, vows not to forsake him in that extremity. Having seen Grand-Pre laid to sleep, after dressing his wounds, he then had proper care taken of his own, none of which are found to be dangerous. His next orders are, that none of their Servants appear without doors, lest this affair should take vent; so all is hushed up very privately.

About noon, Grand-Pre having recovered his speech and memory, Betanford approaches his bed-side, hat in hand; when requiring all present to quit the room, he courteously salutes and comforts him, humbly requesting and conjuring him, as he is a gentleman, to tell him, why he had called him into the field. "Ah! Baron, cried Grand-Pre, swear first to me, on your honour, that you will truly resolve one question."—"By my honour and fidelity, replied Betanford, by my part of Paradise, I

D

"truly

"truly and sincerely will."—"Then Baron, added Grand-Pre, did you ever injure me by being too familiar with my wife?" The Baron, with many solemn oaths and protestations, clears both himself and Mermanda; and Grand-Pre thereupon submissively begs his pardon, since he had really believed the contrary, which alone was the cause of his discontent and challenge; adding, that for ever thence forwards, he will esteem him as his most honourable friend, and while he lives will love his wife more than ever.—It is as great a happiness to repair and reform errors, as it is a misery to commit them.

Betanford, though little hurt himself, staid ten days very secretly with Grand-Pre; when, perceiving that gentleman's wounds in a very hopeful way of cure, they agree to depart. Grand-Pre very kindly thanked the Baron for his life, and all other civilities he had received at his hands; and Betanford as courteously thanked him for restoring his sword, wherewith he preserved his own life; and so like dear and honourable friends they took leave of each other, the Baron mounting his horse for Paris, and frankly lending Grand-Pre his coach to convey him home to Auxone.

Grand-Pre, at his return, tenderly caresses his wife, acquaints her with the occasion and event of his duel, condemns his own folly, and extols her virtues, entreats her to forgive him once more, and vows there breathes not a nobler or more gallant Cavalier than Baron Betanford.

It is difficult to decide whether the truly-virtuous Mermanda was more grieved at her husband's wounds, the danger he had run, and the cause of all, or joyful for his escape and this reconci-

liation: and he sincerely repenting and heartily detesting his former errors, now renews his affection to her, confirming this happy change, by his endearments and whole deportment; but this variety of ruffling passions, and these different disorders in her mind, were soon attended with such grief, as quite devoured the damask roses on her cheeks.

But let us leave for a while, Mermanda's heavenly virtues, to view the workings of Hautefelie's hellish mind, whose malice will not let her rest, seeing her first purposes are thus frustrated. Her invention is now on the rack to find out some new method of satisfying her implacable hatred, and at length she determines to put a period at once to the charms and life of the innocent Mermanda, by bargaining with one Fresnay, a base and indigent apothecary, for two hundred crowns to poison her, which villainy the wretch having undertaken, he accomplishes in less than two months: and thus, O grief to think on! is this beautiful and virtuous young lady most treacherously and unnaturally murdered; but we shall see, that God in his due time, will miraculously detect, and severely punish the agents of such an infernal crime.

Grand-Pre was exceedingly grieved for the loss of his wife, as were her parents and relations, and indeed, all who were acquainted with the virtues of Mermanda, lamented her death, though no one suspected the real cause of it.

This, which occasioned so much sorrow to others, was a triumph to the accursed Hautefelie, who, having been thus successful in her first villainy, which will not satisfy her revenge, meditates another, and, as she hated Mermanda the sister, so did she never love Malleray the brother,

brother, although her husband, whom she observes weeping bitterly, and in great grief for the loss of his sister, and therefore thinks the present a proper time to sow discord between him and Grand-Pre, her brother, knowing that if the latter is slain, she is sole heir to her father, and if the former, she might then satisfy the pride of her ambitious mind, by gaining another husband that is noble, a defect in Malleray which she can never excuse.

To this end she informs her husband that her brother Grand-Pre's jealousy was the occasion of Mermenda's death, for that he suspected, and pretended to be well assured of her being false to his bed, and living in adultery with Baron Betanford, whom, on that account, he had fought a duel with at Brie-Court-Robert; and, moreover, that it was shrewdly suspected that he had murdered his wife; these were things, she said, that she once thought to have concealed within her own breast for ever, but that she knew her husband was and ought to be, nearer to her than her brother.

Malleray was thunder-struck at this shocking news, having always loved his sister as dearly as his own life. However too readily gives credit to all his wife says, without weighing, as he ought, what she had told him, and resolves secretly to acquaint the President his father therewith, not doubting but the old gentleman would exert his utmost power to bring Grand-Pre to the punishment he thought he deserved.

But old Cressonville, who had more prudence than his son, saw that there was no solid foundation for this suspicion, that it was an intricate business not easy to become at, that it would raise a scandal on his family, and especially wound the reputation of his deceased daughter; and

withal, beget him an infinite number of powerful enemies; therefore he thought it most adviseable not to disturb the ashes of the dead, but to let the affair rest in silence, and endeavour to bear the loss of his daughter with what patience he could.

Malleray seeing his father so cold, was all on fire himself, vowing that he would maintain the honour, and revenge the death of his only, and dear beloved, sister Mermenda; and his wife Hautevelia, instigated by all the malice of hell, blows up the coals, and sets an edge to his resolution. At this instant Grand-Pre arrived at Dijon, which Malleray no sooner heard than he sent him the following challenge, by a gentleman his particular friend:

MALLERAY to GRAND-PRE.

"I Should degenerate both from my
"honour and my blood, if I was not
"sensible of the great injuries you have
"done your wife, my sister; they are
"of that nature, that it is impossible for
"me to suffer them to pass unrevenged:
"her murdered innocence, and your
"black guilt, make me as justly chal-
"lenge you, as you unjustly challenged
"Baron Betanford; therefore, to-morrow,
"by the row of walnut-trees, in the mea-
"dow, at the foot of Talon Fort, bring
"either a single rapier, or rapier and
"poinard, and I will meet you without
"seconds. The equity of my cause,
"and the injustice of your's, makes me
"confident in this hope, that as you lost
"your blood near Brie-Court-Robert,
"you shall now leave your life in the
"fight of Dijon. Judge how earnestly I
"desire to try the temper of your heart
"and sword, since I already begin to
"count the minutes that are to pass be-
"tween

"tween this and the time I expect you
shall confront the injured

"MALLERAY."

Grand-Pre, though but just recovered of his late wounds, accepts his challenge, but not without being extremely surprized at Malleray's violent and groundless resentment. At the time appointed, these brothers-in-law met, and the challenged making choice of single rapier, they stripped, and without farther ceremony fell to it, commanding their surgeons to withdraw into the next field, till the death of one of them proclaimed the other victor. After the third breathing Malleray received a mortal wound under the left pap, upon which he instantly dropt down dead, without speaking a word; and Grand-Pre mounting his horse, posts away with his surgeon to Dole, a free city belonging to the Arch-Duke Albertus, leaving Malleray's Surgeon, not to cure, but to bury his master, or at least to convey his dead body to Dijon, for the President Cressonville, his father, to perform that office.

The President is no sooner advertised of his son's death, than he runs with tears in his eyes to inform the parliament thereof, and crave justice on the murderer; but Grand-Pre having staid about three months at Dole, received his pardon, which his relations and friends had procured for him, by the favour of that truly, generous, and noble spirited gentleman, Monsieur Le Grand, his Majesty's Lieutenant of the province of Burgundy.

In the mean time, Hautefelia, that disgrace of her sex, as soon as she heard of the death of her husband, and the flight of her brother, being sure of her

dowry, would scarce wait to see the first put in his grave, but packed up her plate, jewels, and all her most valuable moveables, and went home to her father's house, near Auxone, where, during the absence of her brother, with an imperious hand, and more wicked heart, taking advantage of the age of her parents, she controlled all things at pleasure; but her authority lasted not long, for Grand-Pre being returned from Dole, not only diminishes her power, but treats her with scorn and contempt, having by this time discovered her malice to Mermanda and himself, and that she had been the only cause of his fighting with Baron Betanford, and killing Malleray, all which had created in him, and not without reason, an entire aversion to her.

Hautefelia, all devil as she was, dissembling her malice and hatred, seems to take no notice of this treatment, but is continually meditating how she may satisfy her revenge, and hath recourse again to Frefnay, her execrable apothecary, who, for three hundred crowns more, promises to make away with her brother Grand-Pre, which he accomplishes in about two months: and thus do both this gallant gentleman and his virtuous wife, whose loves were equal when alive, by the same sad steps pass on to death, for one deadly drug, one bloody sister, and one devilish apothecary, bring both to the same miserable end.

And now this blood-thirsty sister, Hautefelia, the author of these woeful tragedies, thinking herself freed from all enemies, and all that stood in the way of her ambition, shews more pride and arrogance than ever; and not listening to remorse of conscience, or aught that might check her towering hopes, flatters herself with
fancied

fancied prospects of the highest worldly grandeur. But heaven, although it seems a-while to wink, cannot be blind to crimes like her's.

About six weeks after Grand-Pre's funeral was solemnized, at which the base Hautefelia, the better to cover her guilt, wept bitterly, and seemed the greatest mourner, Fresnay revelling at a tavern in Dijon, where every drop of wine he drank, was the price of innocent blood, growing now wanton in his cups, committed a rape on the body of Margaret Pivot, a girl of twelve years old, and daughter to the master of the house.

The young girl, all drowned in tears, throwing herself at her parents feet, accused Fresnay of the fact, and they carrying him before the senators of the court of parliament, he is examined; but with great boldness, and many vehement asseverations, denies all that is said against him. Nevertheless, being adjudged to the rack, at the second torment, he owned his crime, and was condemned to be hanged.

Two Capuchin Friars, who were sent to prepare him for his end, by their pious exhortations, so wrought upon his conscience, that being resolved to shew all the true marks of repentance that were in his power, he makes a full confession of all his sins, and, among the rest, that, at the instigation of Hautefelia, and for the lucre of five hundred crowns, which she had given him at several times, he had poisoned Mermanda, and her husband Grand-Pre.

This discovery amazed every body, and the Parliament being acquainted therewith, alter their first sentence, and order Fresnay, for his triple villainy to

be broke alive upon the wheel, and there to languish and die, without being strangled, or receiving the Coup de Grace, which was accordingly executed at Dijon.

A Provost is likewise dispatched forthwith to Grand-Mont's house, to apprehend his daughter Hautefelia, who was ignorant of all that had befallen her apothecary. The Provost found her dancing in the green-house of her father's garden, in company of several other ladies and gentlemen, but soon turned her mirth into mourning, by laying his hands upon her, and carrying her before a president, and two counsellors, appointed to examine her. At first she denied all with a matchless effrontery, and said, that Fresnay being her professed enemy, had basely belied her innocence, and being a wretch of so infamous a character, ought to have no credit given to what he said, but being adjudged to the rack, at the first torment she confessed the whole, whereupon the criminal judges pronounced sentence upon her: "That she should have her breasts torn off with red hot pincers, be afterwards hanged, her body burnt, and her ashes thrown in the air."

By this history let us observe, and imprint in our hearts, how busy the Devil was, by ambition, covetousness, malice, and revenge, to induce Hautefelia and Fresnay to commit these murders; and also how just God was in the detection and punishment thereof, that the fear of the one may deter us from attempting the other, to the end, that as they lived in sin, and died in shame, so we may live in righteousness and die in peace: for there is nothing more certain, than that they who sow wickedness shall reap misery.

GOD'S REVENGE

AGAINST

MURDER and ADULTERY.

HISTORY II.

ARGUMENT.

Pisani robs Gasparino of the Affections of his Mistress Christineta, Gasparino challenges him for the Injury done him, and kills him in the Field. He afterwards renews his Suit to Christineta, who, dissembling her Revenge, by the Assistance of two Bravos, Bianco and Brindoli, murders him in a Garden, and are all three taken and executed.

SIGNOR Thomaso Vituri, a nobleman of Pavia, the second city of the dutchy of Milan, had a daughter, his only child, named Dona Christineta, no less eminent for the endowments of her mind, than admired for the most transcendent beauties of her person. The perfections of this young lady, and the great wealth of her father, could not fail drawing many admirers about her, and among the rest, Signor Emanuel Gasparino, a young nobleman of Cremona, resolveth to seek her in marriage. He ac-

quaints none with his design, but an intimate friend, a young gentleman of the same city, named Signor Ludivico Pisani, by descent a Venetian, whom he entreats to accompany him to Pavia, and lend him his assistance in this grand enterprize. Pisani thinking himself much honoured by this confidence, placed in him by Signor Gasparino, very readily complies with his request, and so they prepare for their journey.

The young gentlemen being arrived at Pavia, were very respectfully entertained by





by Vituri, to whom Gasparino having made proposals of offering his addresses to his daughter, was answered by him like a prudent father, that he would take some short time to advise upon it. In the mean while Gasparino found Christineta very cool in her affections towards him, although he passionately admires her, and endeavours, by all the arts that love can suggest, to procure her esteem: he tries the power of music, entertains her with balls, elegant repasts, set forth in the most courtly manner, and strives to paint her charms and his own tortures in all the lively colours that poetic fancy can inspire, yet all to no purpose; for he still finds her averse to his desires, and not knowing what farther to offer, he resolves to make use of the intercession of his friend Pisani, whom he desires to become a mediator for him, which office Pisani readily accepts, and promises to discharge with all diligence and fidelity: and soon after, having found an opportunity, addressed himself to Christineta in behalf of his friend, with all the charms of wit and eloquence, and leaves nothing untouched that he thinks may advance his suit. Christineta seems strangely perplexed at his discourse, and often changes colour, yet steadfastly fixes her eyes on him, which he carelessly observing, begged she would please to make him for once happy, in sending a pleasing answer to his friend, and her servant Gasparino.

Christineta would willingly have spoke, but could not; for her heart pants, and her sighs confusedly interrupt her words. But at last, with glowing blushes in her cheeks, she tells him, that she is not ignorant of Gasparino's merits, who deserves far better than any thing she pretends to;

but that she can never consent to love him, since she has already fixed, though not engaged, her affections to another. Pisani still extols his friend, and prefers him to any gentleman of Lombardy, and withal earnestly pressed Christineta to name the man who was so happy in her love, which she is once about to do, had not modesty, the sweetest ornament of virgin innocence, for that time withheld her; but after two or three deep sighs, the outward heralds of her inward passion, she thus spoke to him.

"Pisani, it is a dear and near friend
"of your's, who is the first, and shall
"be the last object of my love; but, at
"present, I will not name him: but if
"you please to meet me secretly to-
"morrow, at eight o'clock in the morn-
"ing, in the nun's garden of St. Clare,
"I will there inform you who it is;
"but in the mean time, and for ever,
"forbear to solicit me any more for
"Gasparino, whose addresses I have told
"why I cannot receive."

Pisani finding the lady's resolution thus fixed, took his leave; but faithfully promised to meet at the time and place she appointed. Then coming to his friend Gasparino, he related to him punctually all the foregoing passages, except that of the assignation, whereupon Gasparino despairing of success in his amour, civilly took leave, and returned to Cremona.

Pisani cannot imagine what friend of his it should be, that Christineta loves; but she knows enough for them both, and it may be too much for herself: she knows it is immodest for a woman to make the first advances to a man, but how can a flame like her's be kept within the bounds of decency, she has no friend, as Gasparino had, to speak for her, and so re-
solves

solves to speak for herself: and the appointed hour being come, with her prayer-book in her hand, she hastes away to the nunnery, and thence to the garden, where having taken a turn or two, she sees Pisani enter, whose sight fills her at once with shame, joy, and confusion: the Cavalier, in a very gallant manner, approaches her, and having paid her some slight compliments, told her, he was now come to demand the performance of her promise; modesty for a while represses the glowing passion in her breast, which rages with such fury, that it must, and will have vent; at length, with cheeks covered over with blushes, and with a downcast look, she thus discovers herself to him:

“The person, Pisani, on whom I have fixed my affections, doth exceedingly resemble yourself, is of your own blood, and of your own nearest and dearest acquaintance.” Pisani presses her to let him know his name; when after much hesitation, and many interrupting sighs, she tells him his name is Pisani, and himself the man: intreats him to put the most favourable construction he is able on the boldness of her venturing to make herself a discovery of that passion, which would have been more becoming one of her sex to conceal; but since she was sure her life depended on it, she hoped it would be the more excusable; and that he would now allow Christineta to be a solicitor for herself to Pisani, and that Pisani would give over soliciting Christineta for Gasparino, his rival.

Pisani is strangely surprized at what he hears, and knows not how to behave in so odd an encounter. He sees that her beauty is such, as might inspire love into the breast of the most phlegmatick; he

knows that her descent, her wit, and her accomplishments, are worthy of the highest respect, and that all these with her fortune, made her a suitable match for any person of the highest rank: he knows she is far beyond what either his birth or his fortune can pretend to; yet has he more honour than to betray his friend; and, therefore, after some pause, seeing she impatiently expected his answer, he said, “As I must own the greatness of my obligation to you, without any merit of mine, so I must humbly beg your excuse, in that I cannot be your servant, since that is impossible without forfeiting my honour, and betraying my friend. But were there any other way to requite this favour, you are pleased so undeservedly to shew me, I should be proud to do it, even at the hazard of my life.”

Upon this, in the civillest manner he is able, he takes leave of her, and gives her a kiss at parting, which delights her as much as his refusal of her love afflicts her, the remembrance of it still dwells in her mind, as the taste of it seems ever to hang upon her lips. Pisani departing from Christineta, immediately goes to Cremona, where Gasparino, who had likewise left Pavia, brought with him a heart full of the same tenderness he carried thither, the idea of his dear Christineta is always present, as is that of Pisani with her, and so lords it o’er her mind, that she can no longer be the mistress of herself, she is wholly his, and cannot rest till she again tells him so; therefore, in despite of discretion and modesty, within ten days she sends a trusty messenger with the following letter to him:

CHRISTINETA

CHRISTINETA to PISANI.

“ **T**Hink it not strange, that I second
 “ my last speech with this my
 “ first letter; for were not my affections
 “ to you as sincere as they are constant, I
 “ should never thus have trespassed upon
 “ the modesty of our sex: but where the
 “ flames are so ardent, and the passion so
 “ generous as mine, I hope the truth of
 “ my love will atone for my confidence
 “ in the pursuit of it. I must confess it
 “ is impossible for Christineta to love
 “ any body but Pisani, whom I no sooner
 “ saw, but I deeply admired, and dearly
 “ affected: now, since my zeal to you is
 “ begun in virtue, and shall be conti-
 “ nued in honour, it makes me flatter
 “ myself with the hopes you will not force
 “ me to despair. Thus can I fix bounds
 “ to my letter, though not to my affection.”

“ CHRISTINETA.”

Pisani receiving this letter, wondered at her affection, and now begins to debate with himself, concerning Christineta's love to him, and his respect to Gasparino, he finds his resolution a little staggering; but upon second thoughts, forces his love to give place to his honour, and so sends this answer to her letter:

PISANI to CHRISTINETA.

“ **I** Cannot tell whether you discover
 “ more affection, by your letter, than
 “ I should treachery, was I to accept it
 “ in the manner you desire: but I will
 “ not fear to say, that Pisani would love
 “ Christineta, because she deserves it,
 “ did not his friendship to Gasparino for-
 “ bid it: for, though your beauty com-

“ mands the one, yet honour denies the
 “ other. Could time reconcile these dif-
 “ ferences and difficulties, I could fly
 “ swift to the embraces of Christineta,
 “ whose affection I profess to esteem next
 “ to my friendship to Gasparino. Live
 “ in this assurance, and I will die in the
 “ same.”

“ PISANI.”

By this letter Christineta perceived some dawn of hope, through the obscure clouds of her despair; but fear very soon eclipsed it again, and, therefore, once more she resolved to breathe forth her amorous complaints, and shew the violence of her passion by a second letter. Which in about a fortnight more she sent as follows:

CHRISTINETA to PISANI.

“ **I** May pass the bounds of discretion,
 “ but will not exceed those of honour;
 “ though I have learnt this maxim, ‘ That
 “ the affection which has an end, had
 “ never a beginning.’ If then I live, I
 “ must breathe the air of your love, as
 “ well as this of my life, since it is the
 “ sole cause thereof, as the sun is of the
 “ light. Your letter is so full of doubts
 “ and ambiguities, that I know not whe-
 “ ther it brings me hope or despair:
 “ could you dive as deeply into my heart
 “ as I have into your merits, if nature
 “ does not, pity would inform you, that
 “ you ought to prefer the love of a lady
 “ to the respect of a gentleman, since he
 “ may carry his heart from you, and I
 “ desire to present mine to you. Think
 “ what you please either of me, or of
 “ of yourself, only give me leave to tell
 “ you, that I find doubt a step to despair,
 “ as despair is to death. I write this ra-

F

ther

" rather with tears than ink, and if you
 " will not live my faint, I must die your
 " martyr.

" CHRISTINETA."

At the receipt of this second letter, he found all the bulwarks and strongest defences of his honour quite demolished; he thought no more of Gasparino, or of faithful friendship; but love enters, and takes full possession of the citadel of his heart, and he becomes impatient till he makes a proper submission to his conqueror; therefore, he posts away his page, with the full surrender, not only of his body, but whole soul, to the fair Christineta.

PISANI to CHRISTINETA.

MADAM,

" YOUR virtue and beauty are
 " enough powerful to prevail upon
 " me, but your affection, which adds
 " grace to either, makes me forget all
 " respect to Gasparino, that I may re-
 " member my love to Christineta; but
 " that which gives life to my resolution,
 " is, that it is impossible for him to make
 " me so unhappy in his hatred, as I shall
 " be blessed in the possession of your
 " charms. And in this hope I both re-
 " joice and triumph. You shall not be
 " my martyr, but my mistress, and I
 " will be both your faint and servant. For
 " as you desire to live in my favour, so
 " it is my sole ambition to die in your
 " affection. I will shortly follow, and
 " second this my letter; till when, I
 " shall more desire your presence, than
 " you can lament the absence of

" PISANI."

If Pisani's first letter partly prevented Christineta's despair, this second revived and confirmed her hopes, so that whereas before she condemned her presumption in writing to him, she now applauded her resolution, and blessed the hour she attempted it. Every minute seemed an age, till her beloved Pisani appeared, nor could she rest till she possessed that, which she accounted the height of all earthly enjoyments.

If Christineta was impatient in the absence of Pisani, he was no less so, in being at a distance from his Christineta. His own country, Cremona, grew hateful to him, and all his inclinations were at Pavia; business seemed irksome to him, and every thing that occasioned the least delay to his wished-for journey, which at length, winged by his strong desires, he undertook, accompanied by three or four of his best friends. When he arrived at the place where all his happiness was centered, such was the interview between these joyful lovers, as love only can express.

But it was not enough for Pisani to be possessed of Christineta's favour, he must likewise obtain that of her parents, before either he can enjoy his wishes, or she be compleat in her desires; and so he went honourably, but secretly to work with them; but found them not so tractable as Christineta, and himself had flattered themselves with the hopes of: for old Vituri, her father, preferring wealth to honour or virtue, disliked the motion, alledging that Pisani's father died exceedingly in debt; that his best lands were engaged and mortgaged; that he had many legacies to pay to his sisters; and, what was worst of all, that himself loved the

the court better than the country, and, that he was extremely profuse in his equipage and apparel. These considerations had such weight with Vituri, that he not only rejected Pisani's proposals, but forbade his daughter his company, and himself his house.

This unexpected repulse struck like a dagger to the hearts of our lovers; or like a chilling frost nipt their springing hopes in the bud: however, they continued their affections with constancy, and Pisani, for the present, retired home, considering how they might effect their desires: and at last concluded, that if Christineta could gain her mother's good will, she might in time procure her husband's approbation. To this purpose he wrote to her; and she, losing no time in putting his advice in practice, in a few days gained her mother, who, in less than a month, brought old Vituri to consent to the match, and a day was fixed for the marriage, which revives the dying hopes of the before despairing lovers.

We come now to speak of Gasparino, who, notwithstanding the secret management of this affair, had notice of it; and considering the nature of Pisani's treachery, was extremely incensed at him, and vowed a sudden and sharp revenge, and was for a while so transported by this bloody passion, that he sometimes resolved to pistol Pisani, either in the street, or in his bed; at other times he thought of hiring two or three ruffians to dispatch him, when he rode out; but at last turning his eyes from hell to heaven, he tramples these execrable resolutions under his feet, and thinks them as unworthy of him, as he should be of the world were he to perpetrate them; he, therefore, deter-

mined with himself to think no more of Christineta, nor give way to his resentment against Pisani.

Had he continued in this peaceable and christian temper, he had not exposed himself to the many dangers and misfortunes he afterwards went through, nor given up himself a prey to feed the malice and revenge of his bloody enemies: but now, understanding that all Pavia, as well as his own city of Cremona, made him the subject of their mirth, for being thus baffled in his love, and robbed of his mistress, and as there is nothing that a man of spirit can bear less than ridicule, this, aggravating his disgrace, began to revive in him the strongest sentiments of revenge; he now thought not only himself, but his family dishonoured by the wrong he had suffered, and that he should be for ever branded with cowardice, if he call not Pisani to an account, and force him to give him what gentlemen, with mistaken notions of honour, are pleased to call Satisfaction: so learning that Pisani was in Pavia, taking a resolute gentleman along with him, and his lackey, he rode over to him, and concealing himself in his inn, till the next morning, he sent this challenge to him, by his friend and confidant, Sebastiano, the gentleman who came with him from Cremona, and he delivered it accordingly:

GASPARINO to PISANI.

“YOU, who have made the first
“breach in our friendship, by
“treacherously robbing me of my mis-
“tress, must now, both in honour and
“justice, take my life too, or give me
“your's in requital. If you think me
“severe;

“severe, you may tax your own ingratitude, but cannot condemn my resolution. I shall expect you at the west end of the Park, by four or five, after dinner, on foot, with seconds: the weapons, if you please, two single rapiers, of which I will give you the choice, and be content with the refusal. If your courage answer your infidelity, you will dare to meet

“GASPARINO.”

Pisani, having read the letter, returned this answer. “Pray tell Gasparino from me, that I will meet him with my second, at the hour and place appointed.”

Sebastiano being returned, and Pisani having accepted the challenge, kept it so secret that Christineta, the other half of himself, was wholly unacquainted with it; but he finds out his intimate friend Sfondrato, a valiant young gentleman, of a noble family in Milan, who accompanied him from Cremona, and to him he related every particular of the affair, shewed him Gasparino's challenge, and engaged him, by the long friendship that had been between them, to do him the honour of being his second. Sfondrato very readily, and with great cheerfulness, undertook what the other requested of him; and, accordingly he and Sebastiano, about noon, met to provide and match rapiers, and when the appointed hour was come, they all took horse. Gasparino and Sebastiano were first in the field; but Pisani and Sfondrato were not long after them, when they alighted, threw off their doublets and spurs, and cut away the wooden heels of their boots, that they

might stand firm in their encounter, and then drew their swords.

No less doubtful than bloody was the engagement between Gasparino and Pisani, when, at the third thrust, Gasparino ran Pisani through the heart, whereupon he fell down dead on the spot. Sebastiano running to congratulate Gasparino on his victory, Sfondrato called to him to prepare himself, which he did, and meeting each other with their rapiers, Sebastiano gave Sfondrato a large and wide wound on his right side, and received another from him quite through the left arm, a little below the elbow; and thus they continued fighting for some time with various success, till providence determined to make both parties equal losers, and after they had breathed three several times, Sfondrato ran his antagonist Sebastiano through the small of the belly, and so nailed him to the ground, that he bore away his life on the point of his rapier.

Thus the four combatants being reduced to two, Sfondrato expected that Gasparino would have exchanged a thrust or two with him; Gasparino finding that the loss of so much blood had then made him weak, and that it was more than time to have his wounds bound up, they having taken decent order to have their dead friends conveyed that night to Pavia, without speaking a word to one another, committed themselves to the care of their surgeons; and so their wounds being dressed, to screen themselves from the danger of the law, they took horse and posted away, Gasparino to Parma, and Sfondrato to Florence, from whence they resolved not to stir till their friends had procured and sent them their pardons.

Christineta, we may very well imagine,

gine, at receiving the news of the fatal rencounter, was infinitely grieved; she tore her hair, and beat her breast, in fury; rends her rich and glittering attire, and putting on a mourning garb, abandons herself to sorrow, renounces all company, nor will she be persuaded to receive the least shadow of any comfort; but swears by all her hopes of heaven, and calls heaven to witness, that she will never more taste of, or hear the name of joy, till she has fated her revenge; revenge on Gasparino, who has bereft her of her adored Pisani, whom she loved a thousand times more than her own vital blood. Swears, that as her love exceeded that of all other women, so now shall her hatred.

Some time after, Gasparino having obtained his pardon, returned home, from whence he presently began to renew his suit to Christineta, first by letters, then by his friends, and at last in person. She, dissembling her malice, thought this a fit time to be revenged on him, for the death of Pisani; and Gasparino, having the eyes of his judgment hood-winked by his passion, and not foreseeing how dangerous it is to rely on the favour of an incensed enemy, was very importunate with her for a private interview, which indeed, was to give her an opportunity, she had in her heart long desired, to put her wicked designs against him in execution, she therefore, pretending to be vanquished by the constancy of his affection, appointed him to meet her in the nuns garden, at six o'clock the next morning; and in the mean time, agreed with two wretched ruffians, Bianco and Brindoli, for fifty ducats, to murder him.

Gasparino, transported with the thoughts of enjoying the pleasure of his mistress's company, counted every minute of the

tedious night, and thought it long till morning appeared, at the approach of which, both he and Christineta, were early up, and so were Bianco and Brindoli, who all hastened to the garden; she walked publicly, the two ruffians concealed themselves, and when Gasparino came up to salute Christineta, she greeted him with these words: "*Gasparino, in this place I first had conference with Pisani; and here I purpose to have my last with you.*" At which words Bianco and Brindoli rushed out of the covert, and with many wounds laid him dead at their feet; but he had time to draw first, and for a while very valiantly defended himself, giving each of them several wounds. Christineta seeing Gasparino on the ground, and fearing he might not be quite dead, ran to him, and thrust her handkerchief in his mouth, and with a stiletto stabbing him in many parts of his body, cried out, "*This I sacrifice to the memory of my dear love, Pisani.*" And then Bianco and Brindoli took the murdered body, and tying a great stone about the neck, threw it into the well of the garden; after which the ruffians fled out by the postern, and Christineta went to the nuns church.

The nuns in their cells having heard the clashing of swords, acquainted the Lady-Abbess thereof, who gives an alarm in the house, and coming into the garden with other company, found the postern open, saw the allies bloody, and suspected murder, upon which she ordered a strict search to be made in the garden, but forgot the well. The magistrates also being advertised of this, that they might discover the meaning of the blood that appeared in the garden, thought of a method as worthy them, as they were of their offices, and gave a private charge to all the

G

surgeons

surgeons in the city, to reveal to them, if any person or persons having received fresh wounds, had come to them to be cured or dressed: whereupon Rhanutio, one of the principal surgeons of the city, informed them, that about an hour before he had dressed Bianco and Brindoli, two soldiers, of nine several wounds, which they had newly received. The Prefect and Provost advertised of this, caused them to be brought before them; they were both found together, and without doubt had consulted together what to say. The magistrates enquired who wounded them? they answered, they had a quarrel between themselves, so fought it out. It being then demanded where, and when they fought, they looked on each other, and knowing that Christineta was safe at home, and Gasparino close in the well, they instantly replied, it was in the Nuns Garden of St. Clare, and at six o'clock in the morning; which agreeing with the relation given by the nuns, put an end to their enquiry for the present.

But now Gasparino having been missing two whole nights, and his lackey hearing nothing of him at the house of Signor Vituri, where he used for the most part to pass his time, informed the host, where they lodged, of his fears; and he, according to the custom of Italy, acquainted the Prefect and Provost thereof, who examining the lackey, and asking him, when he saw his master last, was told by him, that he went out of his chamber two mornings before, at six o'clock, with his book in his hand, as if he was going to church; but commanded him not to follow him, and since that time he had not seen him.

Now, by the providence of God, this relation of the lackey's, gave some glimmering light towards the discovery of the murder, for the magistrates seeing that the hour of Gasparino's departure from his chamber, and that of Bianco and Brindoli's fighting agree, and the circumstance of the prayer-book likewise, leading them to the same place, they forthwith ordered the two ruffians to be apprehended and imprisoned, who had designed the very next day to have slipped down the river to Ferrara, and so have got to Venice. They were now examined concerning Gasparino, but both protested, that they neither of them ever knew, or so much as saw him; notwithstanding which they were adjudged to the torture, but the stout villains boldly and constantly affirmed what they had first said, confessing nothing, and begging to be released, as they were guilty of no crime. However, the magistrates thought it adviseable to continue them somewhat longer in prison, and make a narrower search in the Nuns Garden: which being done accordingly, they came to the well that had been neglected before; and letting down their hooks, brought up some pieces of wrought black taffata, which Gasparino's servant affirmed was what his master wore when he saw him last; and then going deeper, they brought up the dead body, with thirteen several wounds about it, whereupon all concluded Bianco and Brindoli guilty. And a little boy, but ten years of age, standing by the body, observed a cloth in his mouth, which being taken out, proved a cambrick handkerchief, marked in one corner in red silk letters, with the name of Christineta. Upon which she was likewise apprehended

in the midst of her pleasures, but being examined, like her two confederates, denied all, till adjudged to the rack, whereto she patiently submitted to be fastened; but her limbs were too delicate to endure the cruelty of the torture, and so she was brought to make a full confession, that in revenge of Pisani's death, she had hired Bianco and Brindoli, the two bravo's, to murder Gasparino in the nuns garden, as before related.

The ruffians were condemned to have their right hands cut off, and then to be hanged, and their bodies thrown into the river Po. And Christineta, notwithstanding all the intercession her father and friends made for her, was condemned to be first hanged, then burnt, and her ashes thrown in the air, which sentence was accordingly executed to the satisfaction of justice, before an infinite number of spectators, whose pity was raised on account of her youth and beauty, and who could not but applaud her

constant affection to Pisani, as much as they abhorred her detestable and bloody revenge on Gasparino.

Bianco and Brindoli, as they lived *un-righteously*, so they died *desperately*, and could not be prevailed upon to shew any signs of repentance; but Christineta was extremely sorrowful for what she had done, and spent the whole time from her sentence, to her execution, in tears, and calling on God for mercy and forgiveness; and when she came to the last stage, where she was to receive the punishment due to her iniquity, she made a short but *pathetick* speech to the people, to exhort them, to beware how they give too much way to their passions.

May all Christians read this history with a holy dread, and remember it with horror and detestation. Who would shun the punishment must avoid the detestable crime; for, if the wages of sin is death, sure none but a madman would lay out his *pains* to be so rewarded.

GOD.

GOD'S REVENGE

AGAINST

MURDER and ADULTERY.

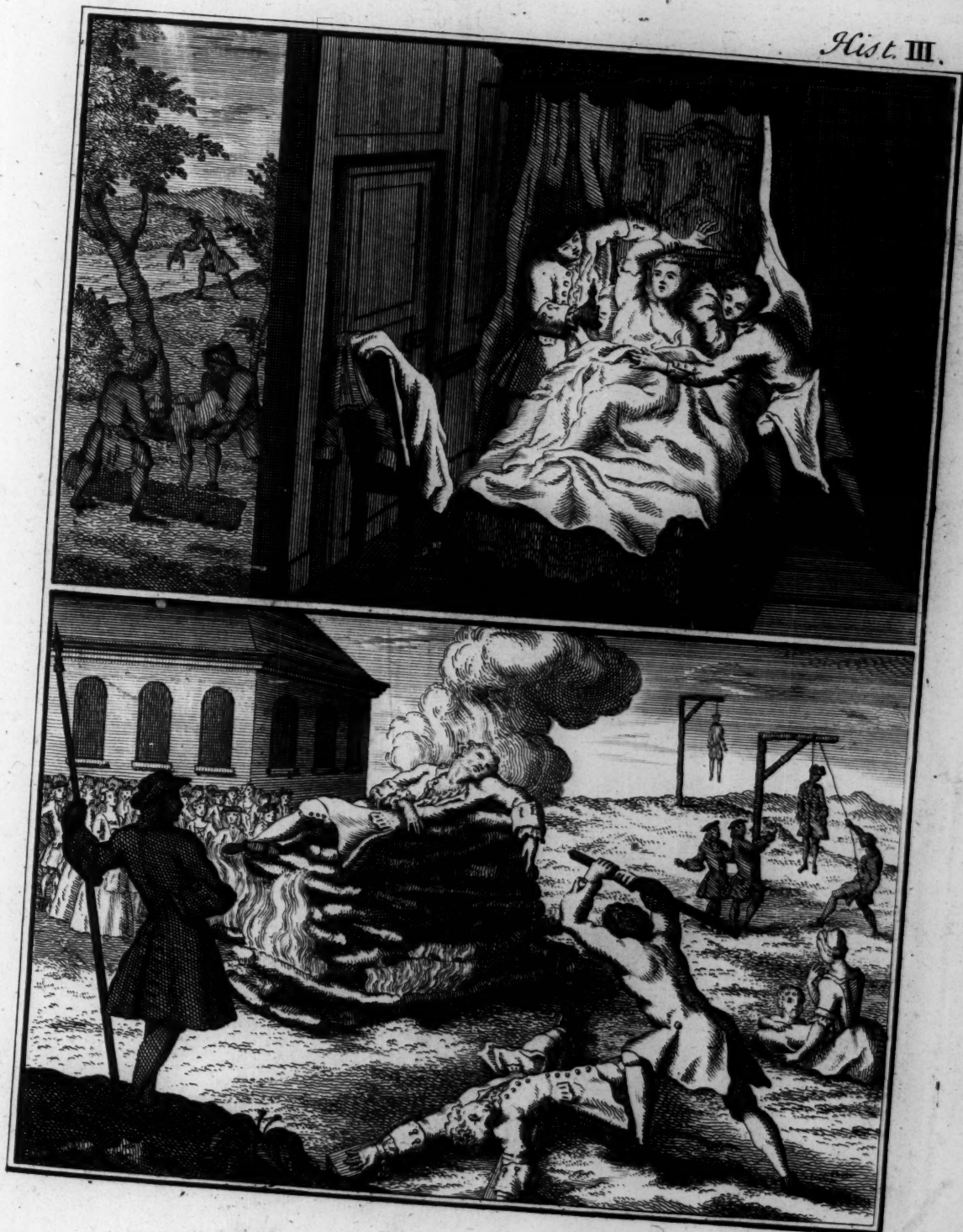
HISTORY III.

ARGUMENT.

Mortaign, deluding Joffelina with a Promise of Marriage, gets her with Child, and then causes his Lackey, La Verdure, and La Palma, his Host, to murder her and her Son. Isabella, La Palma's Wife, through her Jealousy of her Husband, discovers the Murder, upon which they are all taken and executed.

IN the south-east part of France, about a day's journey from the famous city of Lyons, near Darency, a small country village, dwelt an honest farmer, called Andrew Mollard, who being a widower, had one only daughter, named Joffelina, whom he intended to marry to one of his neighbour's sons, and, at his death, to give her all that his parents, and his own industry had scraped together: this young maid was of such blooming beauty, that she was very justly called, Joffelina the Fair.

Within a league of Mollard's house, dwelt an ancient and rich gentleman, named Monsieur de Concy, who had many children, of which the eldest, Mortaign, was a young gentleman, of great hopes, having been educated in the families of several persons of the first quality. He was a perfect master of all those accomplishments which are accounted the chief ornaments of the youth of distinction, such as riding, fencing, dancing, and the like; and having been now for a considerable time at Paris, he was very desirous

Hist. III.



firous of seeing his father, as he heard he was grown very sick and weak; and also, that he might be present at the nuptials of a sister, who was then going to be married to a gentleman of Avergne.

The wedding being over, and Mortaign weary of the diversions of the country, resolv'd upon his return to Paris; but, the night before his intended departure, monsieur De Concy, his father, was taken very ill of a fever, on which account, neither he nor his mother would permit him to leave them. During his stay in the country, as he was one day walking in the fields, he sprung a pheasant, which flying to the next woods, he sent for his hawk; but having ranged far and near for several hours in quest of his game, which he could not recover, he grew very thirsty; and spying Mollard's house at a distance, made up to it.

Mortaign, seeing a man in the vineyard, asked, if he was master of the house, and, if he could get any wine there, being exceeding thirsty. Mollard, guessing who he was by his face, answered him very courteously, inviting him to walk in; where being seated, sent his daughter Josselina for wine, fruit, and what other homely fare his cottage afforded.

Mortaign, who could not keep his eyes off Josselina, wondered to see so fair a maid in so obscure a place, and curiously observing every feature of her face, and every gesture of her well turned body, saw such a symmetry of parts, and such a beautiful proportion through the whole, and that attended with so engaging a modesty and simplicity of behaviour, that he was ravished while he gazed upon her; and vowed to

himself that he would be master of her affections; whatever it cost him. He compared the tint of Josselina's complexion with that of the fine ladies of Paris; and sees how much the truth of nature exceeds the false imitations of art. If Mortaign is transported with the sweetness and beauty of Josselina, no less does she admire, but with a bashful reservedness, the comeliness of his person, and his genteel and manly deportment.

And now all things seem to favour Mortaign's affection, or rather his lust; for Mollard told him, that he rented a small tenement of his father, who now sued him for two heriots, and, therefore, intreated his good word in his behalf. Mortaign, glad of this occasion, which might give him an opportunity of having access to his house and daughter, promised Mollard to use his interest with his father, in the business he mentioned, and assured him, that he would acquaint him with what he had done in it, the next time he came that way: so stealing a kiss or two from Josselina, as her father went into the court to open the gate for him, and withal swearing that he loved her to distraction, and would often come to see her; he thanked Mollard for his good cheer, and took leave of him for that time.

Mortaign being come home to his father's, yet finds his inclination still at Mollard's, with the fair Josselina, and so much does she take up all his thoughts, that he is continually inventing new ways to enjoy her company, which he does frequently, but most commonly when her father is at market. He now begins to attempt her chastity, by a variety of little presents, such as for the most part

H

are

are coveted by young women of her condition; but she very modestly refuses to accept of any, on so dishonourable terms; and assured him, that as a chaste and virtuous reputation was the greatest part of her fortune, so she would never exchange it for the infamous portion of shame and misery. Mortaign was now almost out of all hopes of success; but rather than miss his aim, was resolved to play his last stake, and promise marriage; and accordingly told her, that notwithstanding the inequality of their birth and fortunes, he would condescend to marry her, provided she would first permit him to enjoy his desire. Josselina, with the prospect of such advancement, suffers herself to be deluded, and parted from that which only could have procured what she desired, nor was she only disappointed in her hopes of being a gentlewoman, but otherwise pays dearly for her folly, and must live Mortaign's strumpet, but shall never die his wife.

The beginning of her misfortunes was finding herself with child, which her father likewise discovers to his great grief and sorrow, inasmuch, that he tears his venerable locks with madness, swears her infamy will shorten his days, torments her day and night with threats and reproaches, so that she is forced to acquaint Mortaign with her affliction, and begs he will do something to assist her. He therefore contrives to steal her away from her father's by night, and sends her ten leagues from Darency, to a poor kinswoman's house, where she was delivered of a lusty boy: and still flatters herself with hopes, that Mortaign will shortly marry her; though he means nothing less; for young fellows too often build their tri-

umphs on the ruins of virgin innocence; they will promise any thing before they obtain their desires, but never after think of the performance.

Calintha, Mortaign's mother, who knew nothing of these passages, advised him to marry, and proposes a match to Monsieur de Vasse, the Seneschal of La Palisse, between his only daughter Varina, and her eldest son Mortaign; the affair was readily concluded by the parents, and the young couple like each other at first sight; so that it was generally reported, that the marriage would be consummated in a very short time.

This news both amazes and terrifies Josselina; and, as one misfortune seldom comes alone, she at the same instant, received an account that Mollard, her father, was dead, through grief occasioned by her misconduct; that he had disinherited her, leaving her nothing but the memory of her shame for her portion, and only repentance to comfort her; thus having no friend left to assist or advise her, she resolves to write a letter to Mortaign, to remind him of his promise, to intreat his compassion for her miserable condition, and to beg him to afford some relief to her, and her helpless infant.

JOSSELINA to MORTAIGN.

“ YOU prevailed upon my honour
 “ with the sacred promise of making
 “ me your wife: 'tis true, I credulously
 “ believed your oaths, and consented to
 “ my shame, but it was under the so-
 “ lemn pretence of marriage; and tho'
 “ we wanted the ceremony, yet heaven
 “ is witness to the contract, which now
 “ you resolve to violate. What though
 “ the sweetness of my youth, and the
 “ fresh-

“freshness of my beauty have now lost
 “their charming powers over you? Yet,
 “methinks, the innocent smiles of that
 “lively image you have left to my
 “care, should raise some pity in your
 “breast.—But if you will not advance
 “my fortunes, yet make not shipwreck
 “of my life, as you have of my chastity;
 “and since all my support must
 “proceed from you, it will be high ingratitude
 “in you to deny her maintenance, who hath
 “given you a son; and extreme cruelty not to
 “allow the poor babe wherewith to live, who
 “received his life and being from you. I hope
 “you will prove more natural to him, and more
 “charitable to me, otherwise be assured, that
 “such unkindness will never be long unpitied
 “of men, or unpunished of God.

“JOSSELINA.”

Having sent this letter to Mortaign, and being desirous to draw hope and assistance from every quarter, she wrote the following at the same time to Calintha his mother:

JOSSELINA to CALINTHA.

“I Know not, madam, in what terms
 “to reveal myself, or relate my misfortunes
 “to you, since my own folly and indiscretion
 “makes me ashamed of myself, and the ingratitude
 “of your son, Mortaign, is the occasion of the
 “other; had I been as wise as I am now
 “forrowful; or as chaste as at this hour
 “repentant; or which is more, had I not
 “once loved him as much as he now hates
 “me, I need not have blushed as I do, to let
 “you know that his pro-

“mise of making me his wife, has made me
 “the unfortunate mother of a young son, to
 “whom he is the unkindest of fathers.

“I may well call *myself* unfortunate, since
 “I had no sooner lost my honour, but my father
 “in his displeasure, gave all that substance
 “from me, which otherwise, by right of law
 “and nature, had been mine. I may well call
 “*him* unkind, since he not only refuses to marry
 “me, but also to allow a maintenance, either
 “for myself or child. It is to you, therefore,
 “wanting all other means of succour, that I
 “make my most humble supplications for pity
 “and relief. I hope my love of your son
 “Mortaign, hath not deserved so much hatred
 “from you, but that, in excusing my folly,
 “or rather if you please, my youth, you will
 “be so charitable to the poor babe my son,
 “that I may not want for his sake, nor he for
 “his father's. But if you resolve to allow me
 “no compassion, but will rather rejoice, while
 “I languish and faint under the burthen of my
 “poverty; yet, although you condemn *my* crime,
 “vouchsafe to excuse *his* innocence; that so if
 “I am doomed to die miserably, I may carry
 “this one comfort to my grave, that the unoffending
 “offspring of our love, may not be involved in
 “the guilt and punishment of its mother.

“JOSSELINA.”

When Mortaign and his mother had received these letters, the first with the utmost inhumanity, triumphed in his crime, and mocked that poverty, which he had been the occasion of. He would neither relieve the mother nor the child; but
 burnt

burnt the letter without taking any farther notice of it. Calintha, on her part, had no sooner read that which was sent her, than she threw it away in disdain, resolving not to trouble herself about it; but then reflecting that this may be some impediment to her son's marriage with Varina, her wrath was kindled, and in her rage she wished both were in another world. Nay, she was provoked to that degree of malice, that she absolutely forbade her son to send Josselina, or her child, any relief, but wrote herself this insulting letter to her:

CALINTHA to JOSSELINA.

“**H**AVING been so graceless as to
 “ abuse my son, I wonder how
 “ thou darest be so impudent as to of-
 “ fend me with thy letter, which I once
 “ thought rather to have burnt than have
 “ read. It is not at all strange that thou,
 “ who hast been so deficient in virtue,
 “ should likewise be so much so in thy
 “ judgment, as to imagine, that since thy
 “ own father gave all from thee, I, who
 “ am a mere stranger to thee, as I wish
 “ my son had been, should shew thee any
 “ kindness. This resolution of not list-
 “ ening to thee proceeds from charity to
 “ the deserving part of my sex. I can
 “ pity a virtuous woman in distress; but I
 “ think there is no pity due to a strumpet.
 “ Thou hast added ambition to thy dis-
 “ honesty, in believing that the daughter
 “ of a clown, as thou art, could be wor-
 “ thy of being the wife of a gentleman:
 “ and now thou complaineest of the misery
 “ that these crimes have deservedly
 “ brought upon thee.
 “ Thou dost tax my son with unkind-
 “ ness towards thee, without considering

“ that his love to thee has been cruelty to
 “ himself, and as thou art like to buy his
 “ familiarity with tears, so shall he pay
 “ for it himself by severe repentance.
 “ Expect nothing from us but to know,
 “ that as my son disdains to marry thee,
 “ so do I to relieve thee. Look then on
 “ thyself with shame, and on thy child
 “ with repentance, whilst neither I or my
 “ son shall remember you, but with con-
 “ tempt.

“ CALINTHA.”

Poor Josselina having read this, and finding Martaign so inhuman that he deigned not to answer her letter at all, through mere grief and anguish of mind, with her babe at her breast, fell to the ground in a swoon; and had not the noise thereof brought those who were in the next room to her assistance, she had then ended her misery and her life together.

Barbarous Calintha, understanding soon after where she was lodged, had so cruel a spite against her, that she persuaded her landlady, in a dark, cold night, to turn her and her tender infant out of doors, nor was she allowed to rest in the hay-loft, barn, stable, or any place under shelter; forced to lie in the open field, with the cold and damp ground for her bed, and the heavens only for her covering. And now her eyes, as well they might, poured forth whole floods of tears; her breast heaved with agonizing throbs, and with distracted thoughts she looked for comfort on the harmless babe, whose sight, alas! renewed her sorrow, as it laid crying for want of milk, which she, poor wretch, had not to give it. After many bitter groans, and sighs, and tears, she fell into this soliloquy.

“ Alas,

“ Alas, poor Josselina! 'tis thy own
 “ folly that hath brought thee to this mi-
 “ fery; for hadst thou known how to
 “ prize that beauty which heaven be-
 “ stowed upon thee, thou mightest have
 “ seen thyself as happy as now thou art
 “ wretched and distressed. When thou
 “ lost thy chastity, thou lost all earthly
 “ comfort, thy father's love, and even
 “ the love of him that robbed thee of it.
 “ What multiplied distresses fall upon my
 “ head for one crime: nor must I suffer
 “ in myself alone; but this sweet babe,
 “ whom I have brought into the world,
 “ and have not wherewithal to cherish,
 “ his white and lovely innocence must
 “ likewise share the fate of guilt.”

Not able to proceed any farther, she took the infant up, and kissing it, drowned its cheeks in tears, though she could stream no milk into its mouth. In this melancholy condition, with the weeping babe in her arms, she wandered all night through fields and unknown places, when by the morning light, she discovered a village which she knew, and there sold part of the cloaths from her back, to purchase relief for herself and child. Here she continued some time in the greatest extremity; and knowing that the village where she was, called Villepont, was but seven leagues from Darency, the parish where she was born, she sometimes thought of going thither; but then reflecting that Mortaign's love was turned to hatred, and that it would be dangerous to be near his incensed mother, she resolved to remain where she was, and to write to some of her kinsfolks, and once pretended friends, to assist her. But as wealth finds many professors of friendship, and poverty few or none, so fared it with

Josselina, that she was shunned by all, no one giving heed to what she said, or allowing her to see them, till at last, forced by mere want and necessity, she acquainted some persons with her sad and deplorable condition, who advised her to send his son home to Mortaign, and endeavour to provide for herself.

This was not so secretly related, but it came to the ears of Varina, Mortaign's mistress at Palisse, who presently withdrew her affection from him, as did her father all respect from Mortaign; which he imagining to be upon the account of Josselina, swore he would destroy both her and her son: and the better to disguise his wicked intent, gave orders, that she should be lodged in a better inn, where she was furnished with all necessaries; and farther he sent her word, that he had provided a nurse for his son, and would shortly send his lackey for him, and take more care of her support and maintenance, if she would keep things private. Josselina was much rejoiced hereat, and within three days, Mortaign, as he had promised, sent his lackey La Verdure for the infant, which, with many tears and kisses, she delivered to him. La Verdure following his master's instructions, being got four leagues from Villepont, strangled the pretty babe, whilst it smiled in his face, and wrapping it in a linen cloth, threw it into the river Lignon.

Mortaign, having thus got rid of the son, agreed with La Palma, Josselina's host, and his lackey La Verdure, for two hundred franks, to stifle the mother in her bed, which they performed, and buried her body in the garden. As soon as these villains had perpetrated this cruel murder,

they went over to Darency, to give Mortaign an account, and to receive the reward of their iniquity; which having done, they continued several days together frolicking and drinking. At last, La Palma went home to Villepont, to his wife Isabella, who being an old woman, and he a young man, she was jealous of his stay, supposing he went out in company with Josselina; whereupon as soon as he came into the house, she saluted him with this greeting; "La Palma, you are very unkind to forsake your whore, Josselina, so soon."

La Palma, being highly incensed at this speech of his wife's, first gave her the lye, and then called her whore for saying what she had; but she continuing to rail on and abuse him, he was provoked to that degree of impatience, that he struck her a box on the ear, which felled her to the ground, where she lay for some time like one dead; and the neighbours coming in, on the noise that was made, and supposing her really dead, apprehended La Palma, and carried him before the procurer fiscal of La Palisse, who committed him to prison. Isabella being recovered, complained of her husband's cruelty to her, gave a true account of the occasion of the quarrel, adding, "That if Josselina was not his whore, he is her murderer, of which her maid can say more."

Jacqueta, the maid, being examined, said, that the night before her master's departure for Darency, he was at midnight in Jessalino's chamber, together with one La Verdure, a lackey, and that since that night Josselina had been neither heard of nor seen. And it being farther demanded of her, if she knew whose lac-

key La Verdure was, she answered, Monsieur Mortaign's, the son of Monsieur de Concy. The procurer Fiscal, considering these depositions, shrewdly suspected that there was some villainy undiscovered; he therefore left Isabella, and went to her husband in prison; and after he had severely rebuked him for beating his wife, he examined him upon these two points: First, Why he and La Verdure were in Josselina's chamber at midnight? And Secondly, What was become of her since that time?

La Palma was greatly terrified and amazed at these questions, and the more so, as he the least expected them, which was apparently shewn in the alteration of his countenance, which most commonly betray the inward perturbation of the mind. He answered not directly to the questions put to him, but run out into many bitter invectives against the malice and groundless jealousy of his wife: but being ordered by the procurer to answer to the two points in question, after many frivolous evasions, he denied that either he or La Verdure, were in Josselina's chamber; or that he knew any thing of her departure, or what was become of her; and, therefore, prayed the procurer Fiscal, to release him from his confinement: but he was not to escape at so cheap a rate.

For the procurer, being very familiar with Monsieur Vasse, his colleague, and brother judge of La Palisse, remembered that he had formerly heard him speak of Montaign, who had made his addresses to his daughter Varina; and also of his affair with this Josselina, a farmer's daughter of Darency, by whom he had a child, which was the occasion of the match being

being broke off, between him and Varina; and now considering, that it was his lackey, La Verdure, that was in Joffelina's chamber, at that unseasonable hour, in La Palma's house; and that La Palma himself was present, and that the young woman had never since been heard of, he could not help thinking these were sufficient grounds to suspect, that they must know what was become of her.

Wherefore, like a wise Magistrate, he held it fit the same night, to send La Palma privately to La Palisse, as also his wife Isabella, and Jacqueta, for witnesses, and went thither himself to continue the process, being joined with the Lieutenant of that Jurisdiction; but Monsieur de Vasse, the Seneschal, out of respect to Mortaign's family, absented himself purposely, at his house in the country; the next morning La Palma was re-examined, with the witnesses; and Jacqueta confronting him, stood firm to her first deposition: but he flatly denied all, upon which he was adjudged to the rack. He stoutly endured the first torment, but at the second, he confessed, that he and La Verdure, had stifled Joffelina in her bed, in his own house, and afterwards buried her in the garden: and that Mortaign had hired them to do it for two hundred franks.

The judges immediately issued out their warrants for apprehending Mortaign, and La Verdure; the last the Provost met on the road, and Mortaign was taken in his bed. They were brought separately to La Palisse; and first La Verdure was confronted by La Palma, and denied all; but as soon as they presented his feet to the fire for the torture, he not only con-

fessed the murder of Joffelina, but also that of her infant, whom he first strangled, and then threw into the river Lignon.

Mortaign being examined, with great penitence owned the guilt he was charged withal, whereupon La Palma was condemned to be hanged and burnt; La Verdure to be broken on the wheel, and his body thrown into the river Lignon; and Mortaign to be broken on the wheel, his body burnt, and his ashes thrown in the air; which sentence, in sight of a vast multitude of spectators, was accordingly executed, on a market-day, in La Palisse.

La Palma on the ladder, inveighed extremely against, and cursed the malice of his wife, who, as he said, was the author of his death: and no less did La Verdure, on the wheel, reproach his master, as being the principal instrument of his coming to that disgraceful and untimely end. As for Mortaign himself, after he had expressed much displeasure with his judges, for not allowing him the death of a gentleman, to be beheaded; with many tears in his eyes, he bewailed himself for his barbarous and unnatural cruelty, both to Joffelina, and the child which was his own. He intreated the spectators to pray for him, and begged the executioner to dispatch him with as much speed as he could.

Let all maidens learn to preserve their chastity, by the example of Joffelina: and let men learn by the example of La Verdure, and La Palma, not to shed innocent blood for the lucre of money; and by the lamentable end of Mortaign, to be less inhuman, bloody, and lascivious.

G O D's / R E V E N G E

A G A I N S T

MURDER and ADULTERY.

H I S T O R Y IV.

A R G U M E N T.

Beatrice-Joanna causes Flores to murder Alfonso Piracquo, who made his Addressee to her, that she might marry Alfemero; who being wedded to her, and finding her in Adultery with Flores, kills them both. Alfemero afterwards treacherously kills Thomaso Piracquo, in a Duel, for which he being beheaded, the Murder of Alfonso is discovered, and the Murderers taken out of their Graves to be burnt at the common Place of Execution.

IN Valentia, an ancient and famous city in Spain, there dwelt, not long since, Don Pedro de Alfemero, a young and noble cavalier, who wholly applying himself to the wars, added to his own plentiful estate, as large a portion of honour and reputation. This gentleman, whose temper altogether inclined to martial affairs, resolved to leave his own country, now in peace, and enter himself into the society of the valiant knights of Malta; and accordingly went to Alicant,

where he staid for a favourable wind. During his abode here, going one morning to church, he observed a young lady kneeling over against him, with whose beauty he was so surprized, that it is no difficult matter to determine whether love or devotion most inflamed his heart and inspired his thoughts. The young lady could not help blushing to see with what eagerness he gazed upon her, and Alfemero was dying with impatience, to enjoy the means and happiness of speaking with





with her, but found the attempt would be in vain then, she being in company with several other ladies: but as soon as mass was over, he enquired of an honest priest, who she was, and whether she often frequented that church. The priest informed him, that she was the daughter of Don Diego Vermandero, who was Captain of the castle of that city; that her name was Donna Beatrice-Joanna; and that she was every morning in that church, in the same place, and about the same hour.

The delightful image of this lovely fair one was so deeply engraven on the heart, and had taken such entire possession of the thoughts of Alfemero, that he could know no rest till he was once again blessed with the sight of her; accordingly, the next morning he arose early, and went to the same church, in hopes of being made happy by a second interview. Upon his entering the choir, he saw her again upon her knees at prayers, in the same place as the day before; having so fortunate an opportunity, he resolved to improve it to the best advantage; so kneeling down by her, and not having patience to wait till mass was over, he whispered somewhat of his passion in her ear, interrupting her devotion with his broken accents, and melting sighs, vowing to live and die her passionate admirer. The lady checked his bold address with a modest reprehension; but Alfemero, as soon as prayers were over, renewed his suit with all the warm expressions of a most affectionate lover; and after several repulses, at last prevailed with her to give him leave to wait upon her to the castle, where the Captain, her father, received him with all imaginable respect, and in return of his civilities to his daughter, shewed him the curiosities and strength

of the fort. Alfemero continued his addresses to the lady by frequent visits, which her father seemed to encourage, by the good reception he always gave him: but there was at the same time, in Alicant, a young gentleman of noble extraction, and a plentiful estate, whose name was Alfonso Piracquo, a compleat courtier, and passionately in love with Beatrice-Joanna.

This gentleman, who had a long time concealed his affection, resolved now to make a visit to Vermandero, and acquaint him with it, who thought himself highly honoured by such a proposal, and entertained him with the greatest marks of respect, knowing how great a match one of Piracquo's estate and quality, would be for his daughter, and, therefore, was ambitious of nothing more than this proffered alliance. Thus we see Alfemero rivalled in his pretensions, by a Cavalier as yet unknown to him; but, however, although Piracquo had gained the father, yet Alfemero has already engaged the daughter, who carried herself with that prudence, and respect to Piracquo, that he lived in hopes, while Alfemero had the firm assurance of her love.

Vermandero, after some time understanding, that the inclinations of Beatrice-Joanna, more respected Alfemero than Piracquo, declared himself in favour of the latter, and with an austere countenance, commanded her to conduct herself accordingly; and so, to prevent the hopes and frustrate any attempts of Alfemero, he left the castle to the command of Don Hugo de Valmarino, his son; and taking Beatrice-Joanna with him, in his coach, went privately to Briamatra, his country-house, about ten leagues

K

from

from Alicant, where he intended to continue, till the marriage in agitation was consummated.

At the news of Beatrice-Joanna's departure, Alsemero was extremely perplexed and sorrowful, not knowing, whether it proceeded from herself, or her father; and when he reflected on the suddenness of it, he was afraid it might be on his account; but then, as she thought not proper to give him notice of it, he had but little grounds to build any hopes of her affection upon; nor would the shortness of their acquaintance, and the little familiarity they had together, allow him to tax her of unkindness; he knew not how to resolve these doubts, nor how to behave in an affair of so much delicacy and importance; he thought if he went to Briamata, he might offend the father; if he staid at Alicant, displease the daughter; and though he would rather run the hazard of disobliging *him* than *her*, yet he deemed it advisable to know her sentiments in the matter, and to steer his course accordingly; so he determined to visit her first only by letter, and, therefore, seeking a trusty messenger that he knew he could confide in, he sent her the following:

ALSEMERO to BEATRICE-JOANNA.

"MADAM,

"AS long as you were in Alicant, I thought it heaven upon earth; and being bound for Malta, blessed a thousand times the contrary winds, which kept me from embarking, and sailing from you. Nay, I had taken a resolution of ending my voyage before I began it, and of entering upon another. If you are desirous to know

"what this second voyage is, I must acquaint you then, divine creature, it is to seek your favour, and with the most honourable and religious affection, to court you for my wife; and on this, not only my happiness but life depends. But how shall I hope for this honour, or flatter myself with obtaining so great a felicity, if, as my fears suggest, you have left the city on my account? Fair angel! if I am really thus miserable, I can have no other consolation but that death will speedily make an end of

"ALSEMERO."

It is not easy to say whether Beatrice-Joanna was more grieved to go from Alicant, without taking leave of Alsemero, or more rejoiced at receiving this letter, which brought her an assurance of what before occasioned a thousand anxious doubts in her mind; she resolved to return such an answer, as might keep alive his hopes, but not destroy the opinion she would have him preserve of her modesty.

BEATRICE-JOANNA to ALSEMERO.

"S I R,

"AS I have many reasons to doubt, and not one to convince me, that the little beauty I am mistress of, can have power sufficient to stop you in the pursuit of so honourable a voyage as your first, or tempt you to undertake one so mean as your second; so I cannot but admire, that you should say, that your happiness and life depends on my favour; which I suppose you write, to make trial of your own wit, and my indiscretion, and see if it is possible for
"a maid

“ a maid to give credit to such things as
“ surpass all belief.

“ As to my leaving Alicant, I assure
“ you, Sir, it was with no desire of afflict-
“ ing you, but of obeying my father;
“ and this you may depend on, that al-
“ though I cannot be kind, yet I will
“ never be cruel to you. Live, there-
“ fore, your own friend, and you shall
“ find no enemy in

“ BEATRICE-JOANNA.”

This letter of Beatrice-Joanna not giving Alfemero all the assurance of her love that he was desirous of, he wrote to her again, making many vows of his sincerity and constancy; and swearing, that it would be impossible for him to survive, if she did not consent to his happiness; and she finding him persevere thus in his affection towards her, sent him word at last, “ That
“ he was sole master of hers; and that she
“ earnestly coveted his company, which
“ she desired she might enjoy that even-
“ ing at eleven of the clock, when she
“ would acquaint him with a secret which
“ concerned them both.”

Alfemero, upon this, took post, and arrived at the hour appointed; when going privately to Vermandero's house, he found Diaphanta, her woman, attending his coming, and she conducted him to Beatrice-Joanna's apartment; where she, dressed in the most elegant manner, received him. We may easily imagine, but not so readily express the transports of of these lovers at their meeting; where, after a thousand tender things said on each side, she let fall some dark and ambiguous words, tending to this purpose. “ That
“ before Piracquo was in another world,
“ there could be no hope for Alfemero

“ to enjoy her for his wife in this.” Alfemero presently understanding the meaning of these words, promised her, that he would immediately send him a challenge, and assured her, “ That if he had a thousand lives, he would be ready to hazard
“ them all in her service.” Beatrice-Joanna returned him thanks for this proof of his kindness to her; but being loath that he should endanger his own life, in seeking that of another, she conjured him by all the love he bore to her, not to attempt any such thing, but desired him to leave Alicant for a short time, and return to Valentia: and for the rest, said she, repose yourself upon my constancy and affection. The morning now growing upon them, Alfemero took his leave, promising a full observance of her commands; and accordingly, within a few days left Alicant, and went back to Valentia.

This meeting, though private, was not kept so close, but that Vermandero had notice of it, whereat he was exceeding angry; however he assured Piracquo, that in a short time she should accomplish his desires, and that if his paternal admonitions could not, his authority should prevail over his daughter's perverseness. Thus was Piracquo encouraged by Vermandero to go on with his addresses, though he had private intelligence sent him, that Beatrice-Joanna was already contracted to Alfemero; and this came from a younger brother of his, named Thomaso Piracquo, who had been made acquainted with it at Alicant, and who wrote word of it to his brother, telling him withal, that it would now more nearly concern him to consult his reputation, by an honourable retreat, than to advance

his

his suit with so much violence, which it was impossible he could ever obtain. Piracquo, notwithstanding this advice from his brother, was so far from retiring, that he advanced his suit, if possible, with more eagerness than ever, which gave Beatrice-Joanna great uneasiness and trouble.

Vermadero, as soon as he understood that Alfemero was gone back to Valentia, returned to Alicant, where Piracquo made his daily visits; and now Beatrice-Joanna finding that it would be impossible for her to obtain her desire of marrying Alfemero, till Piracquo was put out of the way, was fully resolved to put in execution, what she had before conceived in her mind; and after ruminating a long time on the bloody means, the devil, who is always ready on such occasions, offered the following:

There was a young gentleman of the garrison, a dependant on her father, named Antonio de Flores, who, she knew, had so great an affection for her, that he would stick at nothing she would require of him, even murder itself, and him she resolved to make the bloody instrument of her barbarous designs. Therefore, sending for him, with many flattering smiles and soothing speeches, she drew him in, to undertake the horrid business; and he most solemnly promised her to dispatch Piracquo. So they first consulted, and then agreed upon the manner of doing it. Flores insinuated himself into Piracquo's company, and got an intimacy with him, as he came so often to the castle, where, watching his opportunity, he one day hearing Piracquo commend the thickness and strength of the walls, told him, "That the strength of that castle con-

"sisted not in the walls, but in the casemates, that were stored with good ordnance to scour the ditches." Piracquo, upon this, told Flores, that he should take it as a favour, if he would give himself the trouble to shew him these casemates; and now Flores, like a bloody falconer, pleased himself to see Piracquo come to his lure. He told him, it was now very near dinner time, and the bell going to ring; but if he pleased in the afternoon, he would wait upon him thither, or to any other part of the castle that he had a mind to see. Piracquo thanked him for the civility of his offer, which he said he would accept of, and so they parted for a while; Piracquo to dinner, and Flores on some pretended business elsewhere.

Whilst Piracquo was at dinner with Vermadero, Flores was providing a bloody banquet for him in the East Casemate, where he went on purpose to hide a naked sword and poinard behind the door. Dinner was no sooner over, but Piracquo found out Flores, and challenged his promise of attending him to the works, which he was very ready to do; so away they went, from the wall to the ravelins, sconces, and bulwarks, and from thence by a postern, to the ditches; then in again to the casemates, whereof they had seen three, and were now going to the last, at the descent of which Flores put off his rapier, and treacherously telling Piracquo, that the way was so narrow that there was a necessity for it; he not dreaming of any ill intended, put off his likewise and followed. Having entered the vault of the casemate, Flores opened the door, and threw it back, thereby to hide his sword and poniard, then stooping, and looking through a port-hole, told him,

him, that the piece there, scoured the whole ditch; Piracquo stooping down to look at it, Flores stepped back for his weapons, and with his poinard stabbed him through the back, and redoubling, thrust upon thrust, laid him dead at his feet, and without going farther, buried him there, under the ruins of an old wall.

Flores having dispatched this bloody business, went with all speed to acquaint Beatrice-Joanna with it, who was infinitely rejoiced, and thanked him with many kisses and blandishments; and the better to conceal the horrid crime they had committed, they contrived to spread a report, that Piracquo was seen to take boat, without the walls of the city, as was supposed to take the air only on the sea; so that after he had been missing some time, and diligent search had been made after him, every body believed he was drowned. Thus far did their contrivance pass: but this craft of theirs proved folly in the end; for though no man had as yet seen into this murder, yet did God, in his due time, both detect and punish it.

All the friends and relations of Piracquo were greatly concerned for the loss of him; and Vermandero professed, that next to his own son, he best loved him. Nor did Beatrice-Joanna shew less outward marks of grief than the rest; but at the same time, secretly and with much joy, sent word to Alfemero, that the only obstacle to their happiness was removed, but without letting him know that she had any hand in his death. Alfemero, therefore, very shortly returned to Alicant, and renewing his suit to the father, at length obtained his consent, and the young couple were married with great pomp and mag-

nificence. Nothing could equal their transports for a time, and their affections to each other seemed so strong as if it were impossible they could be broken; but all this sun-shine of their joys was soon eclipsed, and overtaken by a storm; for scarce had this couple lived three months in the joys of wedlock, before Alfemero grew jealous of his wife, and so far restrained her former liberty, that she complained to the captain, her father, of his discourteous usage; upon which Alfemero, not liking the admonitions of a father-in-law, and to secure himself from the shame and danger he feared, ordering his equipage to be got ready, he hurried his wife away to Valentia. This sudden departure grieved Vermandero, and galled Beatrice-Joanna to the heart, who now looked no longer on her husband with affection, but with disdain and hatred. Many days were not passed, before the father resolved to send to Valentia, to know how matters stood betwixt his daughter and her husband; and for this purpose he makes choice of Flores to go thither with letters to them both. Alfemero being abroad, she told him of her husband's unkindness, of which he taking the advantage, revived the old suit, and her willingness to comply with him, was easily perceived by her desire of seeing him oftener. Alfemero coming home, understood by his wife, that Flores had been there with letters from her father; and by Diaphantes, her woman, who was one of his spies, that there passed many amorous kisses between Flores and her mistress, telling him also, whatever she had heard or seen. Alfemero, in a great fury, flew to his wife, and with his drawn sword in his hand, commanded her

on her life, to tell him what familiarity had passed between her and Flores. Whereat she fetching many sighs, and shedding many tears, answered him, "That by her part of heaven, her thoughts, her words, her actions, have no way transgressed the bounds of chastity or honour; and that Flores never asked that favour of her, which a brother might not with modesty request of his own natural sister." Then, quoth he, "Whence proceeded that great freedom that was observed between you?" whereupon she grew pale, and continued silent. "Come, come, dispatch, said he, and tell me all the truth, or else this sword of mine shall instantly find a passage to thy heart." When lo! the providence of God so ordained it that she was reduced to such extremity, that she must, in endeavouring to conceal her whoredom, discover her murder; which she doth in these words: "Know then, Alfemero, since thou wilt enforce me to shew thee the true cause of my chaste familiarity with Flores, that I am much beholden to him, and thyself more, as it was he, who, at my request, dispatched Piracquo, without which, you very well know, I never could have enjoyed you for my husband, nor you have had me for your wife."

And upon this, she revealed to him every circumstance, as I have before related them, of the murder, but conjured him to keep it secret, since not only Flores's life but her own depended upon it, and vowed that she would forfeit a thousand lives rather than defile his bed, or violate the sacred promise she made in wedlock.

Alfemero, both wondering and grieving at this lamentable story, said little, but thought the more; and although he had reason and appearance to believe, that she who had committed murder, would not stick at adultery; yet, upon his wife's solemn oaths and protestations, he forgave what was past; but strictly charged her, not to see, or admit Flores into her company any more, which, if she did, he vowed to be so severely revenged on her, as should make her an example to all posterity.

Beatrice-Joanna, notwithstanding the threats of her husband, continued her intelligence with Flores, nay, Alfemero was no sooner abroad, but he was at Valentia with her; and they at length became so imprudent, as scarcely to make a secret of their actions, but played their wanton pranks with chamber-doors open. Diaphanta knowing how great a dishonour this was to her master, again informed him of it, who, as he had before threatened, now resolved to take a revenge as bloody as their practices were foul and dishonest. He, therefore, ordered Diaphanta to lay in wait, and acquaint him with the time of Flores's coming from Alicant to Valentia, which she did accordingly; and then Alfemero pretending to his wife, to be obliged to go in all haste into the country, conveyed himself privately, with his rapier, his poniard, and a case of pistols, into his study, which joined to the bed-chamber, where she usually met her paramour.

Beatrice-Joanna, thinking her husband two or three leagues off, sent for Flores, who came away upon the first summons; they no sooner met, but they fell to their accustomed endearments, and shewed great

great joy, she for his arrival, and he for the departure of her husband; she then related the bad usage she had met with from him, which Flores seemed much enraged at, and threatened to do her right on the man that they had both abused. Alfemero heard all, but remained silent, till from words, they fell to their vile pleasures, and then no longer able to contain himself, he rushed upon them, and after having discharged both his pistols, with his sword and poinard stabbed them through and through, as they laid locked in each others embraces.

Alfemero having finished this bloody tragedy, left his pistols on the table, with his sword and poinard all bloody as they were, and without covering, or removing the breathless bodies, shut the chamber-door, and was so far from flying for the fact, that he took his coach, and went directly to the criminal judge himself, and revealed what he had done. The judge was much surprized at what he heard, and returned with Alfemero to his house, where he found the two bodies fresh reeking in their own gore. The news of this murder was presently spread all over the city, and the whole people of Valentia flocked to the place where the persons lay, whom some beheld with pity, others with horror, but all with admiration and wonder.

The judge confined Alfemero prisoner, in another chamber of his own house, while he examined Diaphanta, the maid, upon her oath, concerning the familiarity betwixt Flores and Beatrice-Joanna; and she constantly affirmed, that at this time, and several other, she had seen them in the very act of adultery, and that it was she who first gave her master notice of

it. Whereupon, after a second examination of Alfemero, and mature deliberation, he was acquitted, and the dead bodies were carried away and buried.

But although this earthly judge acquitted him, yet the judge of judges, who sees not only our actions, but our thoughts and intentions, hath something else to lay to his charge, having both observed and remembered, first, how ready and willing Alfemero was to engage himself to Beatrice-Joanna to slay Piracquo; then, though he consented not to his murder afterwards, how he concealed it from the notice of publick judgment, and the criminals from that shame, which, if they had undergone, as they deserved, would have prevented his own. If these are not sufficient to bring down the vengeance of heaven upon him, we shall quickly see him guilty of another murder.

It is to be remembered, that we spoke before of Thomaso Piracquo, who had formerly advised his brother Alfonso Piracquo to give over his suit to Beatrice-Joanna; and he hearing of all these occurrences, could not forbear thinking that Alfemero and she, had contrived the death of his brother, whom he loved to the highest degree, and, therefore resolved to call Alfemero to account for him, and accordingly sent him the following challenge:

THOMASO PIRACQUO to ALSEMERO.

“ I Fear Beatrice-Joanna’s vanity, and
 “ your rashness, have bereaved me
 “ of a brother, whom I ever esteemed
 “ more dear than my life. As I am a
 “ gentleman, I think I ought to seek sa-
 “ tisfaction

"tisfaction for his death with the hazard
 "of my own life: wherefore, as your
 "sword has chastized Beatrice-Joanna's
 "error, I hope mine is reserved to cor-
 "rect your's. I pray meet me at the
 "foot of Glifferon Hill tomorrow at five
 "in the morning, and it shall be your
 "choice either to use your sword on
 "horseback, or your rapier on foot.

"THOMASO PIRACQUO."

Alfemero accepted the challenge, and they met at the hour and place appointed; when Alfemero throwing away his rapier, with his hat in his hand, told him, "He was ready to join with him in the revenge of his brother's murder:" Piracquo not suspecting any treachery, threw away his sword too, and with the same civility addressed himself to Alfemero, who immediately drew his pistols out of his pocket, and shot one through Piracquo's head, and the other through his heart, he having time only to cry out, *O villain!—O traitor!* and then fell dead at his feet.

The news of this murder, with the treachery and flight of Alfemero, was presently known, and the criminal judges ordered a speedy pursuit after him; in the midst of his haste, his horse fell under him, and broke his fore-leg, and Alfemero's right arm; when endeavouring to escape on foot, he was presently overtaken, and surrounded by six horsemen, against whom he defended himself like a gentleman and a foldier, when at last, his rapier being broke, he was forced to yield himself their prisoner. And being

brought the same night to Alicant, a wonderful concourse of people were got together, to see him pass along, who pitied his person as much as they condemned and execrated his crime.

The senate was soon assembled, and Alfemero being brought before them, confessed the fact, and was condemned to lose his head. When he was come to the scaffold, and saw no farther hopes of life, knowing it no time to dissemble with God, or to fear any more from the law, he discovered the murder of Don Alfonso Piracquo, by Flores, in all its circumstances, protesting his own innocence therein, except in the concealment of it.

The judges being advertised of this, cause his head to be struck off for the murder of Don Thomaso Piracquo, and his body to be thrown into the sea, for concealing that of Don Alfonso, which was accordingly executed; and the body of the last named gentleman was taken out of the rubbish in the east Casemate, and honourably interred; those of Beatrice-Joanna and Flores were also taken out of their graves, and burnt at the common place of execution, and their ashes thrown in the air.

Thus we see the justice of heaven will at last overtake the bold offender, and though he seems at present to triumph in his wickedness, and praise the success of his iniquity; yet, let him consider the end of it will be shame and bitterness; and that though God does forbear, he will not forgive, without a sincere repentance.



Hist. V.



GOD's REVENGE

A G A I N S T

MURDER and ADULTERY.

H I S T O R Y V.

A R G U M E N T.

Alibius murders his Wife Merilla; is discovered first by Barnardo, then by Emilia his own Daughter; is apprehended, and executed for the same.

IN the parish of Sprear, about fifteen miles distant from the city of Brescia, in the territories of the Venetians, there dwelt a countryman, named Alibius, who had no wealth left him by his parents, nor could he boast of any thing but their honest reputation, and his own comely person: as soon as he had attained the age of twenty-five years, he married an honest maiden, named Merilla, a farmer's daughter in the parish of Sprear aforesaid, with whom indeed he had but a small portion, nor could

she boast of much beauty, yet she was neither so poor, but that she deserved a good husband, nor so hard-favoured but that she might content an honest one: but Alibius, whose thoughts soared above his birth and fortune, had not lived many years in wedlock, before his vanity and prodigality had wasted and dissipated the greatest part of the small estate that was left him, and now instead of taking up, and endeavouring to recover himself, finding his income too little to support him, and that all was going, gave over

M

all

all thoughts of honest industry, and abandoned himself to the most loose and disorderly company; his virtuous wife Merilla grieving to see the bad courses he took, that he was not only consuming the poor remnant of their fortune, but that he was likewise losing his friends, and wounding his reputation, thought it a part of her duty and affection to him, to request some of their honest and worthy friends and neighbours, by their prudent counsel, to try if they could dissuade him from the irregularities he was fallen into; but as those who are sick cannot discern bitter from sweet, so Alibius's debauched and fickle palate was so far from relishing wholesome advice, that he not only rejected it, but scoffed and reviled those who offered it to him; and it being not so secretly, or perhaps not so wisely managed, but that he perceived it came from his wife, he took it so ill that she should expose those follies, which, as he told her, it was her duty to conceal, that he not only rebuked her in a very rough and outrageous manner, but took occasion from thence to forsake her bed: and that he might in some measure throw the blame of his mispent life on her, he upbraided her with her barrenness, and said, "If he had a child, he should then be a good husband, and not before." His poor afflicted wife, shedding tears upon the earth, and sending prayers to heaven, that it would please the Almighty to bless her with a child, had her request granted, and became the mother of a daughter, whom they named Emilia. But Alibius, who was no way to be satisfied, although he was before so desirous of a child, now began to think this one was one too many, nor could he endure the trouble

and crying of it. But the pretence of his wife's barrenness being taken away, he had now another for his ill usage of her, which was the decay of that little beauty she had, upon which account he treated her as a creature to be loathed and avoided; and poverty withal, notwithstanding his wife's great pains and industry, still approaching nearer and nearer, he resolved to quit her and his child to shift as well as they could, and went himself to seek a service in the city Brescia, which, being a man, as I have said before, of a good appearance, he soon obtained; and now seeing in this city so many beauties, and some, as he thought, who looked with no disdainful eye upon himself, and his own wife growing still more and more odious to him, he was possessed with the belief, that if he could get once rid of her, he might soon gain another with more wealth, as well as more beauty. And here the devil first began to work with him.

Having continued for some time at Brescia, it fell out that the man who bore the silver staff before the Podesta, or chief magistrate of the city, died; and the master of Alibius, to whom he had behaved very well, and who was unacquainted with his base heart, being a man of great authority, preferred Alibius to this office, which was worth at least an hundred zechines a year, besides his diet. This advancement made Alibius look aloft, and scorn every thing he had left at Sprear. And not long after, another accident happened, which helped much to increase his pride and vanity. There was an honest citizen of Brescia, of his own name, though no way related to him, with whom, by his flattery and fair speeches, he

he had got so much credit and good will, that he, dying at this time, not without strong suspicion of poison, left Alibius executor of his will. This deceased name-fake left behind him a young widow, named Philatea, rich and handsome, whom Alibius often viewed with a lustful eye, and thought it would be no difficulty to make himself master of her wealth and person, if that hated obstacle of a wife could but be got out of the way; for which purpose he rode over to Sprear, and under pretence of excusing his former neglect, and his being willing to renew his affection to Merilla, he attempted at several times to take her off by poison, which he gave to her in milk, wine, and roasted apples; but seeing it did not work the desired effect, he took occasion to quarrel with her, in the presence of their daughter Emelia, and reviled and beat her in a most barbarous manner, and then returned to Brescia; still hoping the poison might operate and disperse itself in her veins, and that he should shortly hear the good news of her death.

At this time Alibius laid close siege to Philatea's chastity, who, being not so honest as fair, was soon drawn to sin, and to the prostitution of herself to his beastly pleasure; but their criminal familiarity held not long, before Philatea's apron began to grow too short for her; and so seeing it high time to provide for her reputation, she acquainted Alibius of the condition she was in, and asked his advice, whether she had not best marry one of her own servants; but Alibius, meaning to keep the farm for himself, which he had already got in his possession, bade her take no care for a husband, for that he

would provide a temporary retirement for her, as private as her own heart could wish.

If the wicked Alibius was before resolved to murder his harmless wife, the present condition of Philatea hurried him on still more to that resolution, and accelerated him again to put his horrid design in execution; therefore providing himself with a stronger poison, and in a dark night, taking horse in the east suburb of Brescia, he rode towards Sprear. He had not got above a mile out of the city, when, at the common place of execution, his horse fell under him right against it, and very much hurt him. What a warning was this, if he had had but grace enough to have taken it! but nothing could stop his career, till he arrived at his house at Sprear, where, contrary to his expectation, he found his daughter Emilia with her mother, who by this time was likewise married to a poor countryman of Sprear; and her presence for this time, put a stop to his poisoning design on her mother; for he feared that she had formerly discovered and suspected his design, as indeed she had: wherefore he forebore to administer it. But because he would not quite lose his labour, he again quarrelled with his wife, and after having reviled her with many scandalous and contumelious speeches, beat and bruised her in a most inhuman manner, in the presence of their daughter Emilia, and then took leave of her, permitting her to live. But this did prove no pardon, only a short reprieve.

Returning to Brescia, it was not long before Philatea again importuned him to provide for the concealment of her shame, telling him, her time grew near. Alibius,

at

at this second summons, began to look about, and resolved, at any rate, to send his wife into the other world; therefore, having waited on the Podesta, his master, at supper, he took horse a little before the gates of the city were shut, and, having his former poison in his pocket, rode away to Sprear; but to act his villainy with the greatest secrecy, before he came to the house, he masked, and otherwise disguised himself, then tying his horse to a tree in a meadow, knocked at the door. Poor Merilla, his wife, was in bed with a little girl, named Pomerea, her grandchild, being the daughter of Emilia, whom she sent down, without a candle, to open the door, assuring herself, as indeed it proved too true, that it was her husband Alibius. Pomerea opened the door, and let in one, but she knew not whom, and then out of fear retired to the kitchen, and shut herself in, while Alibius went to his wife's chamber, and after some words gave her a potion, which he forced her to take down: the poor wretch cried out feebly for help, but all in vain; for he, being devilishly bent, and resolved to make sure work, took a brand out of the chimney, and therewith knocked her on the head, without giving her time to recommend her poor soul to God.

Pomerea being recovered of her fright, and not hearing any noise, light a candle and went up to the chamber, where she had no sooner entered than she saw the lamentable spectacle of her murdered grandmother, yet warm and reeking in her gore, she wrung her hands, and not knowing what to do, wept most bitterly, in this sad perplexity; in the mean time Alibius went to seek his horse, but he found only the bridle, for the horse

had got loose, was grazing in the meadow, and it was some time before he could find him; but as soon as he had, he galloped away to Brescia, where, the better to delude the world, he was again, by six of the clock in the morning, waiting upon the Podesta, and conducting him to the Domo, or cathedral church of the city.

Pomerea being somewhat recovered from her fright, ran to the neighbours, and gave an account of the murder of her grandmother, many of which flocked thither to see the woeful and bloody spectacle. The Corrigadors of Sprear, being acquainted therewith, ordered the surgeons to visit the body, who reported that she was both poisoned and beaten to death: then they examined Pomerea, who related all she knew, and afterwards sent all round in search of the murderer. By this time, the news reached Brescia, where Alibius, like a false hypocrite, was all in tears, nay, pretended such concern for his dead wife, that he sent also to many places in quest of the murderer; but at the same time was under the greatest apprehensions that his daughter Emilia, comparing what was acted now, with what was attempted before, might draw such conclusions as might turn to his destruction, and especially as the Corrigadors of Sprear, suspecting her, had taken sureties for her appearance; therefore he, to insinuate with her, used her with more kindness and civility than ever, imagining, that if he could stop her mouth, he need fear no other.

Now by little and little, Time, the consumer of all things, began to wear away the crying rumour of this murder; and so Alibius, thinking himself secure, before three months were fully expired, forgetting

getting Merilla, took Philatea for his second wife, which being known in Brescia, many of that city, though not upon any substantial grounds, but only presumptive circumstances, vehemently suspected that Alibius had a hand in his first wife's murder: but they were afraid to speak their suspicions aloud, because he was well beloved, not only by the Podesta himself, but generally by all the senators.

Now when Alibius thought the storm passed, and saw the skies clear, and that all rumours and tongues were shut up in silence, and that he had nothing to interrupt the pleasures of his new-married state, and the enjoyments he proposed to himself with his fair Philatea, then, when all other means and instruments seemed wanting to bring his obscure and bloody crime to light, we shall see, by the providence of God, that Alibius himself was to be the instrument of discovering it.

For having now the command of money, and living in a better condition than ever, his vanity induced him to send to one Bernardo, a former debauched companion of his, at Sprear, to come over to him to Brescia, on pretence of other business, that there they might carouse and play some of their old pranks together. But this Bernardo being likewise an intimate crony with the husband of Emilia, whom he had heard mention some of their suspicions of Alibius, and wine being but an ill keeper of secrets, one night as he was tippling without the north-gate of Brescia, and having more liquor than wit in his head, he told some of the company, "That although he was a
" poor countryman, yet he had been formerly very intimate with Alibius, as

" high as he now carried himself, and
" that he could not strut about so, if
" he had not murdered his poor wife in
" the country, to get a rich one in the
" city."

These words, being more than once repeated, fell not to the ground, but some of the drunken companions took notice of them, and one especially well acquainted with Alibius, privately told him of them, on which account he sent for Bernardo, and so wrought with him, that he left Brescia. And now again, believing all suspicion was hushed, he began not only to slacken his kindness to his daughter Emilia, but was so barbarous as to withhold the small matter, which he had for some time allowed her towards her support; which unnatural proceeding of his, threw the poor woman into such a perplexity, and knowing him to have been her mother's murderer, that she sorely apprehended he might use her in the same manner. This she had the more reason to dread, as her father had bailed her, but not yet freed her from her appearance before the Corrigadors of Sprear. And now, as simple as she was, she entered into a serious debate with herself, Whether it would not be as great disobedience in *her* to accuse her father, as it was cruelty in *him* to murder her mother; and notwithstanding her own safety required it, and her mother's blood cried aloud for vengeance, yet she could not enter on such a resolution but with tears, nor persevere in it, but with the greatest anxiety and trouble; this resolution was greatly confirmed, when she considered the indecency of her father's marrying again, and of her mother-in-law's so soon laying
N down

down her great belly; and having heard the reports and suspicions that were whispered about at Brescia, she therefore went to the Corrigador, and revealed to him, that her father Alibius, was the murderer of her mother, Merilla.

The Corrigador, who was a grave and discreet man, detained Emilia in his house, and sent an account of this discovery to the Podesta of Brescia, which he received on a Saturday night, and the next morning being Sunday, the Prefect and Senators being come to his house, according to custom, he acquainted them with it. The probability of the affair, and all the circumstances were so strong against Alibius, that they all concluded to imprison him. He was now at the door, rustling in his guarded gown and velvet cap, with his silver staff in his hand, as if he were fitter to check others than be controuled himself, and was waiting to conduct the Podesta to the Domo. He little dreamed how near he was to danger, when an ibier, or serjeant, called him in to speak to the Podesta: and although his conscience inwardly pricked him, yet he put on a good, at least a brazen face, and chearfully came before him. At his first entrance they ordered his velvet cap and silver staff to be taken from him, and then examined him. He made several smooth speeches, protesting his innocence; but they had too many proofs against him, and so he was committed to prison, where he might have leisure to reflect on the vile practices he had been guilty of.

The next day the Corrigadors of Sprear sent Emilia to Brescia, where she was examined by the Podesta, the Prefect,

and Senators; who first exhorted her to consider, that she spoke before God, and that although Alibius was her earthly father, God was her heavenly father, for whom she was to shew more respect. Then they administered the oath to her, and conjured her to speak the truth, and nothing but the truth; and seeing she was but a simple woman, they informed her of the nature of an oath; when Emilia falling on her knees, wringing her hands, and looking stedfastly towards heaven, with eyes full of tears, had not power for some time to utter a word. But the Prefect, with mild exhortations and kind speeches, encouraged her to speak, which she did at last, and related to them, "That her father used often to beat her mother so, that he left her like one dead; that at other times he had given her poison; and that it was he, and no other, who had murdered her."

The Podesta, who as much favoured Alibius as he detested the crime, bad her look to her conscience, and consider, that though Merilla was her mother, yet Alibius was her father; whereupon she, bitterly weeping, said again, "That what she had already spoken was true, as she hoped to enjoy any part of heaven." So they, binding her over to give evidence at the great court of the province, which was to be held about four months after in the castle of the city, dismissed her.

Alibius in the mean time was visited in prison by several of his acquaintance, even some of the chief senators themselves, in charity to him, afforded him that honour, and endeavoured to bring him to make a full

full confession of his crime, but all in vain; for he calling heaven and earth to witness his innocence, made such a shew of religion and conscience, that many of inferior rank and understanding were drawn in to believe that he was falsely accused. But now came the time when the Doge and seignory of Venice deputed and sent forth their criminal judges, through the provinces of their territories, to sit on offenders, and pass sentence upon them. These venerable magistrates having gone through their business in Padua, Vicenza, Verona, and Bergamo, were now arrived at Brescia, and Alibius was now called upon his trial before them; vast multitudes flocking to the castle on the occasion, and he himself appearing in a most spruce dress, and with so pleasant a countenance and confident a demeanor, as if he were rather to receive some honour than the sentence of death.

The worthy judges caused his indictment to be read, and the witnesses were produced against him; first his own daughter Emilia, who, with tears in her eyes, stood firm to her first depositions, That he had often beat her mother almost to death, and had now poisoned her, agreeing in every particular with the deposition she had before given to the Podesta and Prefect of Brescia. In answer to which, her father said, that she was either mad, or did this to come at the small estate he had, after his death, and concluded, that he never had any poison in his possession during his life.

His judges having patiently, and without interruption, heard all he had to say, began to shew him the foulness of his

guilt, which they told him, he had very much aggravated by his obstinate denial of, although they had witnesses that were irrefragable against him. And then two apothecaries boys were called, who severally affirmed, that they had both sold him ratbane at different times.

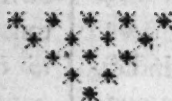
The devil was still so strong with Alibius, that he seemed not yet dismayed; but with much boldness, thinking to set the boys evidence aside, affirmed, that he bought that only to poison rats. This was a mere evasion, and was so esteemed both by the judges and the jury, who brought in their verdict, Wilful Murder, and he was for the present sent back to prison, but still persisted in denying the fact; and as he passed along with outstretched arms, told the spectators, that he was condemned not for his own crime, but to satisfy the unnatural malice of his own daughter: nor did he change his tone when, two days after, he was brought to receive sentence, which was that of hanging.

But now seeing all hopes of escaping quite gone, and having some worthy divines sent to him, to prepare him for his approaching end, he made a full confession of his guilt, thanking them for the good advice they had given him, and begging them, on his knees, to pray to God to forgive him.

As he ascended the ladder, the decent gravity of his deportment, and the comeliness of his person, drew pity from the hearts, and tears from the eyes of most of the spectators. His last speech was brief and moving, wherein he freely confessed his crime, and with an infinite number of sighs and tears besought the beholders
of

of his shameful end, to pray for his soul. He lamented the vanity of his youth, and the dissoluteness of his age, and told them, that his neglecting his duty to God, and placing too much confidence in the devil, had brought him to that infamy, which he beseeched the Lord might be an example, to prevent any of them from

falling into the like follies and wickedness. And so having solemnly freed his second wife, Philatea, from being any way acquainted or accessary to the murder of his first wife, Merilla, he recommended his soul into the hands of the God of all mercies, and died as penitently as he had lived profanely.







GOD'S REVENGE

G A I N S T

MURDER and ADULTERY.

H I S T O R Y VI.

A R G U M E N T.

Victorina causes Sypontus to murder her first Husband Souranza, which is strangely discovered, and Sypontus executed. Afterwards she poisons her second Husband Fassino, for which her Maid, Felicia, being condemned, and upon the Point of Execution, her Innocence is cleared by a miraculous Discovery of the Truth, and Victorina hanged and burnt.

DURING the time that Leonardo Donato was Doge of Venice, there dwelt in that city, a little above the Rialto, upon the Canalla Granada, a worthy gentleman, called Signor Jacomo Beraldi, who had one daughter, named Victorina, whose quality, wealth, and beauty, were sufficient attractions to draw a great number of humble admirers about her of the first distinction, among

which no one was so agreeable to the young lady herself, as Signor Sypontus; but he having lately suffered great losses by the Turks, her father recommended Signor Souranza to her choice, who, though he was of far greater estate, yet was he now in his declining age, and wanted those youthful charms which the young Sypontus was blest withal, and the sprightly Victorina most affected; one
O being

being but in the twenty-eighth year of his age, and the other almost threescore. However her parents forced Victorina to submit to their will, and marry Souranza; but we shall find in the sequel, that this constrained match produced repentance on all sides.

As it is a duty in children to honour and obey their parents, so is it in parents, to carefully regard, and tenderly love their children; and at the disposal of them in marriage, to proceed with judgment, and not with passion. They should endeavour to persuade, but never to force them; for can there be any hell upon earth like that of a discontented bed? And must it not be a great grief to parents to see, that, through their cruelty, their children live miserably? And this was the case of Victorina and Souranza. His best performance of the rites and duties of matrimony were but mere desires; and, let me crave leave of modesty to say it, she found no difference between being a maid and wife; so that her lust out-braving her chastity, and sensuality getting the better of virtue and honour, she allowed those pleasures to Syponthus, as a mistress, which she could not as a wife; or, to use the Venetian phrase, was his courtezana and he her inamorata. Victorina now grew so notoriously vicious, that she perfectly hated her husband, and wished him dead every day, which she often hinted to Syponthus; but he seemed to take no notice of it, till one day hearing of two great losses which had befallen him in the Levant seas, which amounted to 70,000 zechines, and knowing Souranza to be very rich, he resolved to make himself master of his estate, by murdering him, and marrying his wife. This was

concluded on; and three days after, Souranza, going to his house of pleasure near Padua, upon the banks of the river Brenta, Syponthus hired two gondoliers, or watermen, to assassinate him; who being sworn to secrecy, as Sourenza returned, after three days stay, in the close of the evening, Syponthus in disguise, entered his gondola, and with a poniard stabbed him to the heart, cut off his nose and beard, that he might not be known, and threw him into the sea, and with the assistance of his own gondoliers, those of Sourenza, after their master, that they might tell no tales; and making haste home, sent this letter to Victorina:

SYPONTUS to VICTORINA.

“ My dearest VICTORINA,

“ I HAVE began and ended a business which infinitely concerns your good, and my content. The party has drank his fill of white and claret, and is now gone to his eternal rest. I hope a little time will wipe off your tears, and confirm our joys. Judge by this of the sincerity of my love, who will rather endanger my life, and hazard the hopes of a future heaven, than not enjoy the present paradise of your company. We must for a while refrain each others company, that we may be able to meet with the more content, and less danger.

“ SYPONTUS.”

This news gave Victorina infinite joy, which, the better to cloak, she lamented greatly after some time, and complained to her father of her husband's long absence; and he mentioning it to some of Souranza's

Souranza's relations, they sent a nephew of his, named Andrew Souranza, up the Brenta, to his country seat, to know how he did; but he brought word that his uncle was gone from thence four days before, and that he could learn nothing of him, although he had made the strictest enquiry. Victorina appeared all in tears, and grieved above measure, for fear any mischance should have befallen him. What she did in appearance, his friends did in reality, when word was brought that a dead body was taken up by some fishermen, and landed at St. Mark's stairs. Signor Souranza, the nephew, went presently to the place where it was, and observing the body very curiously, at last spied a red spot in the neck, and a wart under the left eye, by which marks he was too well assured that it was the body of his uncle, Signor Baptista Souranza, and ordered it to be carried to an adjoining house, in which it was stripped naked, and had several wounds discovered about it, either by a sword or poniard, which occasioned much discourse and enquiry, but at first to no purpose. His friends were much grieved at his inhuman murder, and Victorina remained the most disconsolate widow in the world.

Andrew Souranza, the nephew, who had formerly made some observations on the character and behaviour of Victorina, vehemently suspected her of this murder; and for the more effectual discovery, enquires of Felicia, Victorina's maid, what persons most frequently visited her lady. She told him, that Syponthus in particular had sent her many letters, and that there was much love and familiarity between them; upon which young Souranza desired her to intercept some of their letters,

which she promised to do: and in a short time after, being sent to fetch her lady a pair of Roman gloves from her dressing-room, she opened an ivory box, in which she found the letter that Syponthus had sent her. Souranza having read the letter, accused Syponthus and Victorina of this murder before the criminal judges. They were examined, but denied the fact, and disowned the letter, upon which they were separately committed to prison. Syponthus suspecting the discovery of the letter was by the treachery of Victorina, privately sent the following to her:

SYPONTUS to VICTORINA.

“ **I**S it possible that your affection to
 “ me hath all this while been feigned,
 “ and you, whom I trusted with all my
 “ secrets, are now become the only wo-
 “ man in the world to betray me? I
 “ have hazarded my life for your sake;
 “ and must I now be so unfortunate and
 “ wretched as to lose it through your
 “ treachery? When I bore matters with
 “ such care and secrecy, that no witness
 “ whatsoever could be produced against
 “ me, must my own letter, which was
 “ safely delivered to you, be brought
 “ forth to convict me of my crime, and
 “ be the cause of that shameful death,
 “ which otherwise I had avoided? Is this
 “ the recompence of my sincerity? O
 “ Victorina, Victorina! If I had had a
 “ thousand lives, I could have been con-
 “ tent to have lain them all down to have
 “ saved your's, and can't thou throw
 “ mine away with so little concern? But
 “ that my love may shine the more thro'
 “ your malice, know for your comfort,
 “ that

" that I will never betray you, but die
 " your faithful servant,

" SYPONTUS."

VICTORINA having read this letter, was thereby thrown into such distraction of mind, that she was full of tears, sighs, and exclamations; she knew it was impossible for any body but her maid Felicia, to have discovered Syponthus's letter, and for that she loaded her with curses and execrations, but what was still the greatest of her torments, was, that Syponthus not only suspected her want of love but loyalty; to clear herself from which she wrote to him as follows :

VICTORINA to SYPONTUS.

" I Should be the most ungrateful wo-
 " man in the world, should I prove
 " treacherous to Syponthus, who hath been
 " always so faithful to me : but believe
 " me, I speak it in the presence of God,
 " and upon the peril of my soul, my dear
 " Syponthus, I am as innocent, as Felicia
 " my maid, that witch, that devil, is
 " guilty of producing your letter, which
 " I fear will prove your death ; but I re-
 " joice that it shall prove mine also. For,
 " to clear myself of ingratitude and
 " treachery, as I have partook of the
 " joys of life with you, so will I of the
 " pains of death : and although your
 " letter accuseth me not of the murder
 " of my husband, yet will I accuse my-
 " self not only as accessary, but author of
 " that murder, that I may be sure not to
 " survive you. This resolution I sign
 " with tears, and will shortly seal with
 " the blood of

" VICTORINA."

Syponthus, in the midst of his troubles, received this letter from Victorina, which so perfectly cleared her of the treachery he suspected, that he now resolved no torments should force him to accuse her. The next day he was put to the rack, where he endured the torments with wonderful constancy ; but the next day, the torments being redoubled upon him, he confessed the letter, found in Victorina's box, was his, and himself guilty of the murder, and totally cleared Victorina from having any part in it. Upon which he was condemned to lose his head, between the two columns at St. Mark's Place ; and being brought upon the scaffold, confessed the murder to all the spectators, but took it entirely upon himself, and declared on the words of a dying man, that Victorina was absolutely innocent of it ; but she was afterwards sent for into the Court, and threatened with the rack ; but she boldly denied all, and was in open court acquitted and discharged.

We may now suppose this wretched adulteress triumphing more in her good fortune than her innocence, and imagining the storm of her punishment was blown over ; but herein did her hopes deceive her, for although she had made her peace with earth, yet had she not with heaven ; and though she might delude the eyes of earthly judges, yet could she not impose on God, but when his appointed hour came, then did her crimes, her murder and adultery, draw down the vengeance that was due to them.

Six months wore scarcely past, since the murder of her husband Souranza, and the execution of her inamurato Syponthus ; but Victorina throwing off her mourning, adorned

adorned herself with her richest jewels, and resolved to have a second husband. Among the crowd of suitors, which her great wealth and beauty brought her, she fixed her eyes on Signor Ludovico Fassino, a handsome young gentleman, rich and nobly descended, but extremely vicious and debauched, which her parents understanding, they used all the means in their power to break off the match, but all to no purpose; for having followed their commands in her first marriage, she was resolved to satisfy her own pleasure in this, and so had not been acquainted with Fassino above ten days before she married him. Scarce was a month passed since their nuptials, but he left her, to follow his old course of debauchery; so that now she was become a married widow; and as jealousy has more eyes than Argus, she employed them all to find out who were the persons that drew his affections from her, and learnt, that the lady Pale-riana had more of his company than any one else. At first she endeavoured by all the endearments of love and respect, to recover his straggling heart; but these having no effect upon him, she stormed, and in most sharp and severe terms, reproached him for his unkindness and disrespect to her, who must now be slighted for the company of an impudent and common courtesan. Signor Fassino paid no regard to what she said, but pursued the same lewd courses; upon which Victorina vowed revenge, and that his life should pay dearly for abusing her, and so concluded secretly to poison him; and to that purpose, sent to Augustino, an apothecary, to whom she offered three hundred zechins to do her this service, who very honestly refused it, and persuaded her to

better thoughts; but she persisting in her bloody design, was resolved to do it herself, and to that end, procured poison from a strange empiric, who was then at the city of Venice, and waited only for an opportunity to administer it.

It was impossible that Fassino's dissolute life, and extreme debauchery could be long unattended by sickness, for this is a punishment most sinners like him are sure of in this world; and he coming home one day, complaining of some disorder, and desiring his wife to make him some comfortable broth, she, being glad of this opportunity to put her wicked design in execution, ordered her maid Felicia to get some ready, then going up to her closet, fetched down the poison, and having sent Felicia from the fire, put two parts of it into the broth, and kept the third by her. Victorina, who no less intended a revenge on Felicia too, for discovering Syponthus's letter, ordered her to carry the broth up to Fassino, which he supped up, whilst she went up and laid the other part of the poison in Felicia's trunk, and came down undiscovered. About an hour after, the poison began to operate with Fassino, who called for his wife, and told her, he feared Felicia had poisoned him in the broth she gave him, and desired she would send for his friends and relations, who found him ready to expire, and cried out with one consent, "He was poisoned." Victorina accused her maid Felicia, which dying Fassino confirmed, that she had that morning poisoned him in the broth she gave him; upon which she was apprehended, and carried before the criminal judges, where, with tears and cries, she endeavoured to justify her innocence; but Fassino being now dead,

and there appearing all manner of probable circumstances of Felicia's guilt, she was hurried away to prison.

Three days after, being brought upon her trial, she confessed that she had given him broth, but knew nothing of any poison in it; when being asked, if any body else meddled with the broth, she answered, "No, not to her knowledge; but she was afraid it was a contrivance of her lady's to be revenged on her, for a former grudge." Upon this, the criminal judges went to Faffino's house, and secured Victorina, and searched all the boxes, trunks, and chests, but found nothing till they came to that in Felicia's chamber, belonging to her, and there was discovered the remaining part of the poison; upon which she was condemned to be hanged on the morrow at St. Mark's Place, and Victorina was discharged.

Accordingly the next morning, the sorrowful Felicia was brought to the place of execution, attended by the mourners of the seignory, as is the custom of Venice, where she modestly ascended the ladder, with silent pensiveness and affliction; and most of the numerous spectators were in tears, at the sight of so beautiful a young woman, brought to so infamous a death, especially when, with hands and eyes lifted up, she called heaven to witness to her innocence; declaring, that she never put any poison into her master's broth, nor knew how the poison which was found in her trunk came there. She said, that although she had nothing to say of her own knowledge to accuse her lady with, concerning this fact, yet in her belief she was guilty of it; but that as she desired to die a Christian, she hoped that God would forgive her as she did, and likewise the

judges who have condemned her, though innocent.

The executioner being now just ready to do his office, Augustino, the apothecary, happened to land at St. Mark's stairs, and seeing a young woman in that situation, demanded who she was, and her crime. Upon which the whole circumstances being related to him, he remembered Victorina's having tempted him to the same murder, wherefore he believed the maid was innocent, and the mistress guilty; therefore he hastened to the gallery of the Doge's palace, where the officers sat to see the execution done, which he desired might be stopped for a while, because he had something material to discover in relation to Faffino's murder. Augustino then, in a discreet manner, informed the judges of what Victorina had offered to him to undertake that business, the time and place, when and where she would have seduced him, for three hundred zechins, to have poisoned her husband, with the good advice he gave her to lay aside so wicked a design.

The judges were very much surprized at this account; but seeing the deportment of Augustino, gave entire credit to him, and blessed God for sending him at that critical juncture of time, to prevent their shedding the innocent blood of Felicia, who was sent back from the place of execution to the prison; and orders were immediately given for apprehending Victorina, who was exulting on the success of all her bloody schemes. But now was the Lord's appointed time come, wherein her cruel murders, her whoredom, adultery, treachery, and hypocrisy, were all to be brought to light and punished.

The

The judges ordered her to be confronted by Augustino, who now made good his former allegation. At first she denied every thing; but being adjudged to the rack, she acquitted Felicia, and acknowledged herself guilty, both of her first and second husband's murder. Upon this confession, the innocent Felicia was set at liberty, and Victorina condemned to be hanged and burnt at St. Mark's Place, the next morning; which was accordingly executed. She died very penitent, and desired that her example might be a warning to others, not to be guilty of the like crimes, which would certainly bring them to the like punishments.

Could the power of sin defend us from

the punishment, or the fading pleasures of it comfort us in our sufferings for it, we might have some encouragement to be wicked; but when our utmost reward is to be compleatly miserable, he that is guilty of it sins against his own reason, and to be sure not to be happy, purchases his own damnation at the price of his immortal soul.

Let us, therefore, praise the providence and justice of God; the first by protecting the innocent, after an extraordinary manner, from the brink of destruction, in the example of Felicia; and the latter, by punishing the detestable sins of murder and adultery, in the sad example of Victorina.



GOD'S REVENGE

AGAINST

MURDER and ADULTERY.

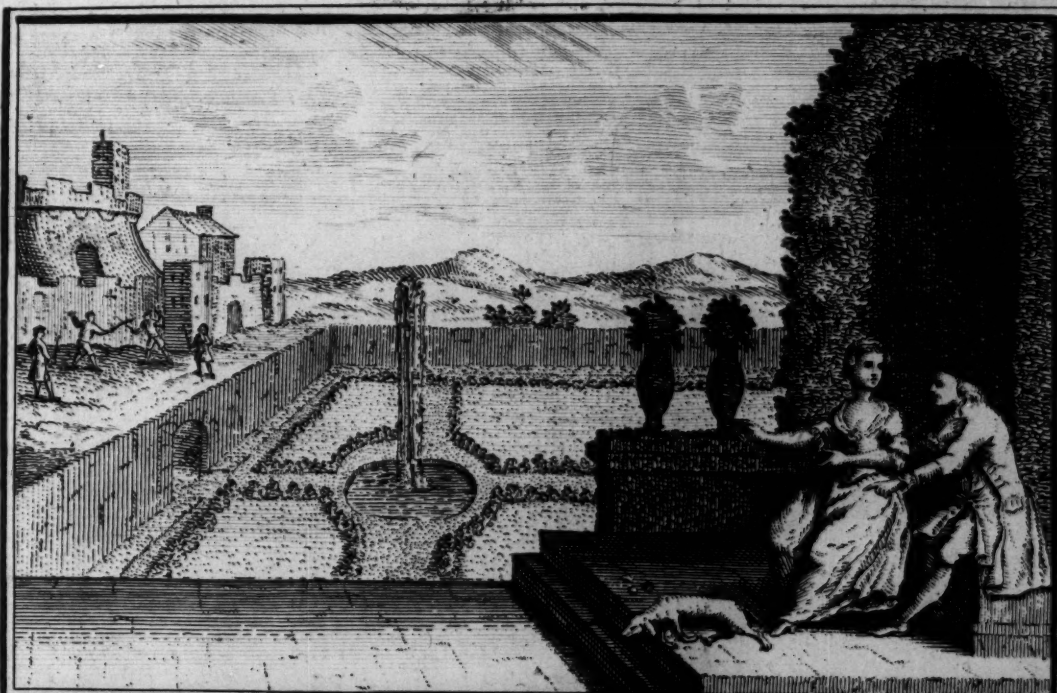
HISTORY VII.

ARGUMENT.

Catalina causes her Maid Anfilva, at two different Times, to attempt to poison her own Sister Berinthia; but failing therein, she hires a Quack, named Sermiata, to poison Anfilva. Catalina is killed by a Thunderbolt, and Sermiata is hanged for poisoning Anfilva. Antonio steals Berinthia away by her own Consent; whereupon her Brother, Sebastiano, fights with Antonio, and kills him in a Duel. Berinthia, in Revenge, murders her own Brother Sebastiano; for which she is adjudged to be confined between two Walls, which soon produces her Death.

IN the city of Avero in Portugal, there lived a nobleman, named Jasper de Vilarezo, very rich, and happy as he thought, in three children, two daughters and a son. The latter, named Sebastiano, having attained the age of fifteen, was, by his father, made page to Count Manriques de Lopez, and

constantly attended on him at court; the two daughters, named Catalina and Berinthia, from their tenth to their thirteenth years, lived sometimes at Coimbra, and sometimes at Lisbon, but for the most part at Avero, with their parents; who were so careful in their education, and bestowed such accomplishments upon them,





them, that being beautiful young ladies withal, they were no sooner seen, but they were admired by every one.

Catalina was somewhat plump in her person, and but short of stature; Berinthia was tall and slender; Catalina brown, Berinthia fair; the first was proud and imperious, the latter of a courteous and affable behaviour. These ladies being now arrived at an age fit for matrimony, many cavaliers of Averro became suitors to them, as well out of respect to their father's wealth and nobility, as to their own beauty and accomplishments; and it was not only in the city where they lived that they had admirers, but their fame was spread throughout the whole kingdom; so that many noblemen and knights resorted from most parts of Portugal, to the house of Don Vilarezo, to pay their devoirs to his daughters. But he, thinking them yet too young for marriage, made the civilest excuses he could; but was determined to do nothing rashly in an affair of so much consequence, as that of disposing of them for their lives.

Don Sebastiano, their brother, being often at Madrid, Validolid, and Lisbon, became very intimately acquainted with Don Antonio de Rivero, a noble and rich young Cavalier, by birth likewise a Portuguese, of the city of Elvas, who was first gentleman to the Duke of Braganza; and the better to unite their friendship, he proposed his eldest sister to him in marriage, and invited him to go over to Averro to see her, offering to accompany him thither, and to second his enterprize, both with his father and sister. Don Antonio listened with great pleasure to this proposal, knowing that such a match would be so far from a disparagement to

him, that an alliance with so noble a family would be an additional honour to his own. He therefore thought himself greatly obliged to his friend Sebastiano, and begged him to fix a day for their journey; in the mean time he made all the preparations for himself and train, that he thought were suitable to his rank and fortune. And the time being come for their departure, they set out for Averro, where, as soon as they were arrived, Don Jasper de Vilarezo, both on account of his own quality, and the report which his son had made of Antonio, received him with the utmost marks of respect. He was afterward introduced to the mother and the two young ladies, and although he could not dislike Catalina, yet there was something so charming in Berinthia, that he no sooner saw her, but he fell in love with her, and taking the first opportunity informed her of it.

Berinthia received this declaration with many blushes, which now and then cast a rosiate veil over the white lillies of her complexion: and to speak truth, if Antonio was enamoured with Berinthia, no less was she with him; so that not only their eyes, but thoughts and hearts, did both sympathize, and both cherish the same flame: he, on his part, did frequently steal to her privately, to acquaint her with his anguish: and she, although she had not the will to grant, yet had she not the power to deny his suit.

But so forcibly did the charms of Berinthia act upon Antonio, that he was impatient of delay, so finding out the father and mother, with all the earnestness, but, at the same time, good breeding, imaginable, he demanded their daughter Berinthia in marriage. Don Vilarezo, Q
thanking

thanking Antonio for the honour he did him, in thinking of one of his daughters, told him, "He was sorry that he had not made the elder his choice, whom he thought the more deserving of him." Antonio answered, that although he could not deny but Catalina was fair, yet Berinthia was more so in his eyes. Vilarezo then replied, "That he must match his elder daughter Catalina, before the younger, Berinthia, and that he should be as glad to have given him the first, as he was determined not yet to dispose of the second." And no more was advanced on this subject at their present meeting, Vilarezo taking Antonio, and his son Sebastiano with him, went to hunt a stag, of which he had great plenty in an adjacent forest: but whilst Antonio's body pursued the stag, his thoughts were flying after the beauty and perfections of his adored Berinthia: he was wounded to the heart with Vilarezo's answer, and Berinthia was the same, when she was made acquainted with her father's resolution; but modesty, that precious and becoming ornament of female virtue, obliged her, to the utmost of her power, to endeavour to conceal her grief from Antonio, who entreated his dear friend Sebastiano, to use his best persuasions with his father, to listen to his suit, and grant him fair Berinthia for his wife. Sebastiano performed the part of a true friend and a gentleman, but all in vain; for his father Vilarezo was resolute to marry Catalina, his eldest daughter first.

Antonio, notwithstanding this refusal, had not power to leave the sight of his dear Berinthia so soon, therefore was obliged to invent some excuse for tarrying

a little longer, so he pretended to neglect her, and seemingly made his addresses to Catalina, conversing with her often, but still in general terms, whereupon she built many fond hopes, for she no less admired Antonio, than her sister did. Strange effects of this ungovernable passion! both sisters most desperately and distractedly in love with the same gentleman, when but one must, or perhaps neither can, enjoy him.

Catalina was the pretext, but Berinthia both the object and sole cause of Antonio's continuance where he was, and her he courted and laid close siege to as often as opportunity gave him the private felicity of her company. But business now calling him home to Lisbon, he was forced for a while to take leave of Averro, but the night before his departure, taking Berinthia, after supper, secretly to a window, he begged her to honour him with the acceptance of a scarf and plain pair of gloves, although both scarf and gloves were exceeding rich: and she in return, the morning of his departure sent him, by Diego, his page, a curious handkerchief, wrought with hearts and flames, in gold, silver, and coloured silks. He promised Berinthia to write, and see her shortly, and Catalina intreated him to be no stranger at Averro. To Catalina he gave many words, but few kisses or embraces; to Berinthia many kisses, but more tears, on account of leaving her. Berinthia was sad at his going away; Catalina joyful, in hopes of his return. Antonio and Sebastiano taking coach for their return to Lisbon, the first triumphed and rejoiced as much in the love of his fair Berinthia, as his friend Sebastiano grieved, that of his two sisters, Antonio would not accept

accept of Catalina, nor his father consent to give him Berinthia for his wife. Notwithstanding which, they confirmed their friendship with many reciprocal protestations, that since they could not be brothers, they will live and die dear and intimate friends. It were to be wished that we might not find the contrary.

Antonio being arrived at Lisbon, found a strange alteration in himself; for he could now think of nothing but his beloved Berinthia; and in these amorous contemplations, if the reflection on the kindness of his mistress gave him pleasure, so did her father's obstinate refusal of making him happy, perplex him. He wished Avero was Lisbon, and either he was himself in Avero with Berinthia, or she in Lisbon with him; but as this was at present impracticable, he resolved to write, which he thought himself obliged to, both by respect and affection; but then the difficulty would be, to find access for his letter, on account of her father's distaste, and her sister's jealousy. At last he thought on this expedient: he wrote a letter to Berinthia, and accompanied it with a rich diamond ring, then sent both by Diego, his page, to Avero, whom he obliged to pretend love to Ansilva Catalina's waiting woman, and that he had got leave from his master to come to Avero, to seek her in marriage.

Where being arrived, he found an opportunity to convey his master's letter, with great secrecy, to Berinthia, who was just then beginning to despond, and thought that absence from her, and some new object in another place, might make him quite forget the vows he had made at Avero: but this letter and present immediately restored her to her former hopes,

and made her fly with all the haste and privacy she could to her chamber, where, bolting the door, she kissed the ring and letter, and breaking open the seal of the latter, she found these words:

ANTONIO to BERINTHIA.

"Dear BERINTHIA,

"IF you have as much faith as beauty,
"you will rest assured of my constant
"affection: but as my tongue lately
"wanted power, so now doth my pen
"want art to inform you, how much I
"adore your person, and honour your
"virtues. But were you able to pry into
"the inmost secrets of my soul, you
"would know that Antonio is ambitious
"of no other earthly blessing, but to live
"thy husband, or die thy martyr. Think,
"dearest creature, that my good or ill
"depends entirely on thee. Be pleased
"therefore, fair Berinthia, to let me
"know my doom, that I may prepare
"myself, either to wed thee, or my
"grave.

"ANTONIO."

Berinthia having again and again perused this letter, gave it a thousand kisses, for the sake of him who sent it; then very secretly locked it up in her casket, and waited for an opportunity to confer privately with Diego, and to learn when he returned to his master at Lisbon, that she might send an answer to his letter. In the mean time, Diego delivered his master's letter to Vilarezo, in favour of his pretended suit to Ansilva, as also to pay his compliments to the family, and return thanks for his entertainment at Avero; but this was done without either mentioning

ing Catalina or Berinthia in particular, or any thing of his coming again to Averó, which was some concern to Vilarezo, but more to Catalina; while Berinthia laughed in her sleeve to see how well Antonio had contrived to get his letter safe delivered, and how cunning his page Diego carried on his suit to Ansilva; for he was so pressing in his feigned courtship to her, and she so enamoured of him, that Catalina was of opinion, that a very short time would finish the match; but he and her sister, Berinthia, knew the contrary. Diego at the end of three days taking leave, Berinthia sent the following letter by him to Antonio:

BERINTHIA to ANTONIO.

“ **H**AD I not been more courteous to you, than I doubt I am fair, you had not known so much of my affection, nor had I tasted so many of my father’s frowns; and although by your letter, you have given me assurance of the regard you have to my poor merits, yet think with yourself, whether I ought to reward your constancy with my love, since I cannot do it, but at the expence of my obedience to him, who gave me being. It is not my desire that you should die my martyr, but my father will not permit me to let you live my husband: but however, it is not impossible, but time may effect that, which, at present, seems so great a difficulty. I would not be thought by this to give you too much hope, but only to take off some of your despair. My sister’s jealousy, and my father’s obstinacy, behove us to ma-

nage with the utmost secrecy and circumspection.

“ BERINTHIA.”

The incredible joy with which Antonio received this letter, is not to be related; he read and kissed it as many, or more times, than it had syllables: he saw Berinthia’s modesty shine through her affection; but although he was sure of her love, yet was he not of her person; for though he observed her letter contained many verbal compliments, there was not one real promise; besides, he was afraid his absence, and her father’s commands, might in time cool the fervency of her affection; but then again he checked his own timidity, in conceiving the least suspicion of Berinthia’s constancy. Sometimes he was inclined to acquaint his intimate friend and brother, as he would call him, Sebastiano, of their affections; then again he thought not to do so without her consent. At other times, the strong inclination he had to see Berinthia again, made him almost resolve to go over to Averó; but then, when he reflected on Vilarezo’s austerity, and Catalina’s jealousy, he made an end of his journey before he began it. In this perplexity he knew not what to do; but considering that delays are dangerous, especially in matters of this nature, he packed up his baggage, and taking leave of Sebastiano, under pretence of being obliged to leave the city, on account of his health, and going to his own house at Elvas, which being much nearer than Lisbon, to Averó, he imagined he could better order matters there, and let slip no occasion to forward the prosecution of his utmost wishes.

The

The second day after his arrival at Elvas, it being near a month since he sent his first, and till then his last letter to Berinthia, he now again dispatched his page Diego, with a second letter to her, and at the same time sent a chain of pearl, and a pair of gold bracelets, richly enamelled. The arrival of Diego was very pleasing to Anfilva, and more so to Berinthia; but Catalina had no comfort from thence, because she could not learn from him any account of his master's coming again to Averó. Diego had no sooner saluted Anfilva, but, as his most important business, he sought an opportunity to speak to Berinthia, which she was as ready to give him, and, having received the letter from him, which was sent by Antonio, she tripped away to her chamber, to open it in secret, and there read these words:

ANTONIO to BERINTHIA.

"IT is impossible for my pen to express the joy my heart received at reading your letter. A thousand times I kissed the lines, and as often blessed the hand that wrote them; but though your letter saves me from despair, yet does it not give me that hope, or rather that assurance, without which, it is impossible for me to be happy; I mean, that Antonio may be as secure of the heart of Berinthia, as Berinthia is of that of

" ANTONIO.

P. S. "I have left Lisbon to reside at Elvas, that I may be the nearer to receive your commands."

Berinthia having read this letter, was not displeased with the impatience of her lover, which seemed owing to the fervency of his passion; and, therefore, resolved to keep him no longer in suspense, but at the return of his page, to let him know how entirely she was his: but little did she think what this interim of time would produce.

Catalina's affection to Antonio being so strong, she prevailed upon Vilarezo, her father, to write a letter to him, to be sent by Diego at his return, to know his resolution, whether or know he was willing to accept of the offer he had made him of his eldest daughter, and withal to invite him to Averó. Although Antonio's passion for her sister was kept a secret from her, yet she greatly suspected it, and was the more confirmed in her suspicions, by Diego's bringing no letter, or particular message to her. Her love gave her hope, but reason and judgment administered nothing but despair. The better to find out the truth of the affair, she set her maid Anfilva to work with Diego, but he having learnt his lesson, acted his part well, and had too much fidelity to betray his master's secrets: but lo! an accident happened at this time, which discovered the whole mystery. Being gone down into the garden on a Sunday morning to gather some flowers against her going to church, with her father and mother, her sister Catalina ran into her chamber to seek the history of Cervantez, which she had lent her the day before, and not finding it on the table, or in the window, but searching the pocket of a gown that lay in the room, there found Antonio's letter, whereby she discovered the secret she was so much afraid

R

afraid of: she immediately carried the letter, and shewed it to her father, who being very angry with Berinthia, and with many sharp words and frowns restraining her of her liberty, resolved in the first letter he sent to Antonio, to forbid him his house, unless he would leave Berinthia and take Catalina. He now began also to suspect, that the page Diego's courting Ansilva was but a feint, thereby to convey letters betwixt his master and Berinthia; for which reason he was just going to turn him out of his house, had not Catalina persuaded him to the contrary, for she would not any ways displease this maid, who was designed to be her instrument in a cursed undertaking, which she was then meditating in her heart.

Catalina's affection to Antonio, and her malice to Berinthia, were so violent, that, in hopes of obtaining the possession of one, she vowed the destruction of the other. To which end, by the help of a bribe of an hundred ducats, she prevailed upon Ansilva to undertake to poison her sister Berinthia, and promised her as much more when she had effected it: Ansilva accordingly sent into the city for some very strong poison, by an unknown messenger, which was presently brought her in a small gallipot: but on the night in which she intended to have given it Berinthia, her spark Diego, being with her in a close shady arbour in the garden, kissing and toying, on a sudden, his nose fell a bleeding to that degree, that having quite wetted his own handkerchief with the blood, Ansilva, in a great concern for her lover, pulled out her's, and with it the gallipot, which, in her fright, she had forgot; and this falling on the floor

of the arbour, which was paved with stone, broke in pieces, and spilt the poison, which Diego's spaniel licking up, was instantly swelled in a monstrous manner, and died at their feet. Whereat Diego was much amazed, and Ansilva so strangely confounded at the accident, that her colour changed, and she could not invent any thing very readily to say to cover the matter. Diego pressed her to know for whom the poison was designed, and of whom she had it. Her answers were so variable and contradictory, that he was still the more astonished. However, conjuring her by all the bonds of their affection to discover the secret, and, with a thousand protestations, vowed it should die with him; at length by his oaths, his kisses, and importunities, which few women can resist when alone with their lovers, and more especially for fear he might suspect it was designed for himself, he drew the confession from her, "That Catalina had prevailed upon her thereby to poison her sister Berinthia, because she suspected that she was better beloved of his master, Don Antonio, than herself." Diego, having got this secret from Ansilva, under pretence of getting a remedy for his bleeding, hastened out of the garden, after having given her several kisses, and promised to return to her, and, like a faithful servant to his master, and an honest man, finding out Berinthia, he revealed every particular of this shocking affair; and begged her to be careful not to receive any thing from her sister, or Ansilva; and withal, to honour his master with a letter, because he intended to depart next morning for Elvas. Berinthia trembled at hearing the account of this horrid contrivance, and,

and, having returned thanks to God for the discovery, promised Diego a letter to his master, and heartily thanked him for his fidelity and affection to her, which she vowed to requite; and as an earnest of her favour to him, she plucked a diamond ring from her finger, and gave it him for his good office.

Diego, very early the next morning, told Anfilva, that his father had sent for him to meet him at La Secco; but that he would not fail to be back in three days: so, under colour of giving orders about his horse, he taking leave of her, stole to Berinthia's chamber, whose fear, poor lady, would not permit her to take any rest that night, which she had partly worn out, and employed in writing her thoughts to her dear Antonio; and knowing that she was not safe with her father and sister, at Averro, she resolved to commit her person and honour to his protection; she had no sooner finished her letter, but Diego came softly to her chamber-door, to whom she delivered it, and he posted away with all speed to Elvas, where, for a while, we will take leave of him, and come to Catalina, whose malice finding no rest, demanded of Anfilva, as soon as she came into her chamber, whether she was prepared for the business she had undertaken: Anfilva answered her, that in three days time, it should certainly be accomplished, and put a period to all her sister's hopes, at which she was much rejoiced. And this maid, her and the devil's agent, accordingly provided herself with a second poisoned potion, which she did not doubt but she should be able to make more useful to her, than the first.

In the mean time, Diego being arrived at Elvas, delivered Berinthia's letter to his master, which Antonio having kissed as if he would thaw the wax with his warm breath, and breaking it open, found these words:

BERINTHIA to ANTONIO.

“MY sister Catalina's malice is so
“extream to me, for the affection I bear to you, that it makes her degenerate, not only from grace but nature, and seek to bereave me of my life. The bearer, your page, whom I pray you love for my sake, since he, under God, hath preserved me for thine, will more fully and particularly acquaint you with the foul design there is against me. So since there is no safety for me in my father's house, into whose arms and protection shall I throw myself but thine, of whose sincere affection I have no doubt; and you, I am well assured, will both preserve my life and honour? It is not out of disobedience to my father, but out of respect to my own life, that I forsake him: but it is both love and fear, which make me impatiently desire to see you, and intreat your assistance to.”

“BERINTHIA.”

Antonio could not but be much surprized at the account he received in this letter, and having examined his page, as to the circumstances of it: love, fear, hope, sorrow and joy, all act their several parts, both in his heart, and his countenance: and prizing Berinthia's life and safety,

safety a thousand times before his own, he dispatched Diego away, with great expedition, the same night to Averro, with the following letter, which he commanded him to deliver to Berinthia, with all possible speed and secrecy :

ANTONIO to BERINTHIA.

“ **A**S the sun breaking forth from an
 “ obscure cloud shines the clearer,
 “ so doth thy affection to me, through
 “ the infernal malice of your sister Ca-
 “ talina, and in such sort, that I scarce
 “ know whether I more rejoice at one,
 “ than I detest the other. Having there-
 “ fore first thanked God for thy happy
 “ and miraculous preservation, I next
 “ commend my page for his fidelity,
 “ which shall not be forgotten or unre-
 “ quited by me. I am so impatient of
 “ being blessed with the sight of you,
 “ and having the honour of assisting you,
 “ that I think the time long, while I am
 “ writing this short letter. I return it
 “ post by Diego, and my coachman tells
 “ me, he will rather fly than drive, till
 “ he has brought me to my life's sole
 “ happiness. Let the precise hour, if
 “ you please, be Monday night, at twelve
 “ of the clock, when I will wait your
 “ commands at the postern of your fa-
 “ ther's garden. Let the light of a can-
 “ dle in the pavillion be my signal, and
 “ the report of my pistol shall be thine.
 “ I am throwing away my pen, but must
 “ only tell you, that my sword shall protect
 “ thy life, and thy honour be protected
 “ by my own : and that no minutes ever
 “ were more tedious than those that are
 “ to pass, till Berinthia shall be in the
 “ arms of her

“ ANTONIO.”

Whilst Diego posted away to Averro, his master Antonio prepared to follow him ; and the next morning took his coach and six horses, and three resolute gentlemen his friends, to assist him, with each a rapier and case of pistols. Diego arrived two days before his master at Averro, whose length of absence gave much displeasure to Ansilva ; but Berinthia thanked him a thousand times for returning so speedily. He delivered his master's letter, and prayed her to prepare herself against the appointed time. Berinthia having read the letter, could not help shewing the joy it gave her, in her countenance ; nor was it to be supposed, that she could be any ways backward in a matter that so nearly concerned her peace of mind, and most ardent desire. She then, with all possible secrecy, packed up the best of her apparel and jewels in a small trunk, and earnestly wished the hour to come that she might fly to the arms of Antonio. As for Diego, he cast such a subtle mist before the eyes of Ansilva, that it was not possible for her, or her mistress Catalina, to suspect what they were about. A second piece of treachery was now prepared, to do that which the first could not effect : For the very night that Antonio had promised to fetch Berinthia away, and she had retired early to her chamber, under pretence of going to her bed, Ansilva entered the room with a sweet posset in a silver cup, in her hand, and told her, that her lady had drank one half, and had sent her the other, it being a very cool and refreshing draught.

But Berinthia, being forewarned by her former danger, was guarded against this wicked design of Catalina : yet she seemed to accept it with great pleasure, and

and returned her sister many thanks for her kindness, and told the maid she would drink it before she went to bed; at the same time desired Anfilva to fetch her prayer-book and gloves, which she had left in the morning in her sister's chamber. So whilst she was out of the room, she poured the poisoned draught into another cup in her closet, and wiping the first three or four times carefully, put some almond milk she had by her into it. And when Anfilva returned, she took it up, and drank it, desiring her to let her sister know it was to her health and good repose.

About an hour after, by Berinthia's order, Diego came with great secrecy into her chamber, to wait the hour of his master's coming, and to assist her in her escape. She acquainted him with her sister's pretended kindness, in sending her the draught, which he, being assured was poison, begged her to make proof of on Catalina's parrot, which she had that afternoon brought with her, into her chamber; and so, by her consent, with a spoon, he forced some down the throat of the bird, which immediately swelled to a violent degree, and died almost immediately. They were both astonished at the malice and cruelty of Catalina, and glad to think on the escape Berinthia had twice had, for which they praised God, then threw the remainder of the poison out of the window, and laid the dead parrot on the table.

And now Berinthia impatiently waited for the hour of her happiness, which was that of Antonio's arrival: Diego often looked on the hour-glass, and Berinthia a thousand times at her watch; at length the appointed, long expected

hour of twelve came, and the punctual Antonio arrived, who was not more transported at the sight of the candle, than she was at the report of his pistol: and now, all things being hushed up in silence, and every person in the house fast asleep, Diego softly taking up the little trunk, Berinthia as softly followed him, so they slipping very privately through the first court, and from thence to the postern of the garden, where Antonio, with a thousand kisses, received her to his arms, having no light but the lustre of her eyes to guide them to their coach; which having got into, with the three gentlemen, his friends, and Diego, with the trunk following after, they came to the gate of the city, which they soon got open with a silver key, and so speed away for Elvas.

Leave we them on their journey, and let us return to Averro, to bloody Catalina, and her wretched maid Anfilva, who, lying in a room very distant from Berinthia's, could not possibly hear the least part of what passed; although to speak truth, they could not sleep for the joy they had, to think that Berinthia was dispatched. They prepared themselves in the morning to hear some pitiful outcries in the house for Berinthia's death; but seeing it near ten o'clock, and no rumour nor noise heard, they both, as they were wont, went into her chamber, thinking to feast their cruel eyes on the lamentable object of the murdered lady; but, contrary to their bloody hopes, they found her not dead, but flown, and Catalina beheld instead of her sister, her own parrot poisoned on the table. They were amazed at this, and looked fearfully on each other; Anfilva for her part, protested and vowed that she saw Berinthia

S

drink

drink the poison; but finding Berinthia's little trunk removed, and afterwards hearing that Diego was gone, without taking any leave, Catalina discovered for certain, that her sister was escaped, and her poisoning plot detected and prevented. So giving the alarm in the house, she went directly and acquainted her father, mother, and brother, with her sister's flight. Vilarezo grieved to see himself robbed of his daughter, and Sebastiano of his sister; but when they understood that Diego was gone with her, they were well assured that Antonio had carried her away, which was confirmed to them by the porter of the city; who told them, that betwixt twelve and one, a coach and six, having a lady and four cavaliers in it, attended by a page on horseback, passed very speedily through the gate. Vilarezo, and his son, being greatly enraged at this affront, consulted together what was best to be done; and their first resolution was to send a messenger to Elvas, to know whether Berinthia was there with Antonio, or not.

The messenger being returned, assured them, that it was so, and that Antonio was retired to a castle of his, without the walls of the city, where he kept the lady Berinthia with much honour and respect. Had old Vilarezo had his health and strength, he would himself in person have undertaken a journey thither; but being at that time ill of the gout, he sent his son Sebastiano to Elvas, accompanied by six resolute gentlemen, his near allies and friends, to demand of Antonio the reason of this affront upon his honour, and his family; and by law, force, policy, or persuasion, to bring away Berinthia. The lady being his sister, and

Antonio his former intimate friend, Sebastiano did not very willingly undertake this journey; however, being come to Elvas, and finding the intelligence that was brought him true, he repaired with his six associates to the castle of Antonio, who admitted them all into the first court, and only two into the second, having kindly saluted, and bad them all welcome to his castle. Sebastiano laid before him the baseness of such an action, as stealing away his friend's sister, and the daughter of a man of quality, in that clandestine manner; the scandal it would bring upon the young lady, and consequently upon all their family, telling him withal, that his father and himself, were resolved to have her again, cost what it would; and, therefore, conjured him, by the respect that was due to his own honour, and by the remembrance of their former friendship, to deliver up his sister Berinthia. Antonio answered him, that it was by an honourable affection, and with no base design, that he had undertaken to assist his sister in her escape, that he never had done, nor would ever do any thing that should bring any dishonour to her, or her family; and that her malicious sister Catalina was author of what had happened, who, by her woman Anfilva, had twice attempted to poison her: therefore, since he could not deliver her up with safety to herself, or without forfeiting his own honour, and acting against his own conscience, he was resolved to protect her in his own castle, against any one whatsoever.

Sebastiano was strangely perplexed, as well as the two friends who were with him, at this resolution. He desired Antonio that he might see and speak with
his

his sister Berinthia, which he freely granted; then taking Sebastiano by the hand, they all went together into the hall, whither Berinthia, having notice given her, soon came, accompanied by two of Antonio's sisters, and advancing with cheerful countenance towards her brother, she first saluted him, and then the two gentlemen, her cousins, that were with him. Sebastiano craved the favour of Antonio that he might confer a little privately with his sister: to which Antonio replied, that Berinthia's pleasure should ever be his; and she willingly consenting to it, Sebastiano took her by the hand, and leading her to a window at the farther end of the hall, acquainted her how much his father was offended at her disobedience, how greatly she dishonoured herself, and what an affliction her conduct was to her friends in general. He therefore intreated her to return, saying, if she was inclined to marry Antonio, that was not the way; as her imprudent conduct would make him look upon her as a wanton and a prostitute.

Berinthia, in her defence, related to him every particular of the cause of her departure, and constantly affirmed what Antonio had before told him of her sister Catalina's two several attempts to poison her, by her maid Anfilva, but with more ample circumstances; and to prove the truth of what she had asserted, produced Diego, who vowed and protested the same. Sebastiano checked her for what she had said, telling her, that in seeking to wrong others, she would in the end but wrong herself; he told her it was both folly and cruelty to invent such a story to blacken her sister with, which would but make her own crimes the more

glaring; and that there was no safety for her but in her return, which he once more earnestly pressed her to.

Berinthia again answered him, that there was no safety for her at Averro, and that she could not find any where greater than she had at Elvas: she begged him to think charitably and honourably of her departure, and to tell her father, that if he would not hate her, he ought to love Antonio, whose castle she found a sanctuary, both for her honour and her life; taking God and his angels to witness, that her sister Catalina's crime was true, and not feigned. Sebastiano seeing Antonio resolute, and his sister wilful and obstinate, began to take leave, telling her, that he should leave her to her own folly, which would soon bring her to repentance; and then concluded to go into the city, to resolve what he had best to do for her good and his own honour. Antonio invited him to dine in the castle with his sister; but he refused, and charged Antonio with having made the first breach in their friendship, which he should repent, if not repair; and so departed.

Sebastiano being come into the city, he consulted with the gentlemen, his associates, what was best to be done, who were unanimous in their opinion, that he ought to send and acquaint his father with what had already passed, and to desire his directions for their future conduct. His cousin, Villandras, undertaking the journey, waited upon Vilarezo, and relating to him the particulars, he was greatly grieved and perplexed at the account which was brought him; and, instead of comfort, received fresh Affliction. He examined Catalina very carefully, and her maid Anfilva; but they

they not only denied all that was laid to their charge with great boldness and constancy, but endeavoured to maintain their pretended innocence with many bitter oaths and asseverations: whereupon he sent Villandras back to Elvas, with the following letter:

VILAREZO to SEBASTIANO.

" I Commend thy wisdom, as much as
 " I condemn Antonio's resolution,
 " and grieve at thy sister Berinthia's
 " folly and disobedience. I have care-
 " fully and curiously examined both Ca-
 " talina and her maid, whom I find as
 " innocent as they are constant, in the
 " true denial of the guilt with which
 " they are falsely charged. I have con-
 " sulted nature and honour so to guide
 " my steps, that I might be able to di-
 " rect thine, and both suggest to advise
 " thee to this resolution, that either by
 " the law of the kingdom, or by that
 " of your sword, return my daughter,
 " thy sister Berinthia, to me with expe-
 " dition; and let not the oratory of
 " Antonio's tongue, or her tears, per-
 " suade thee to the contrary; for then,
 " as she is guilty of our dishonour, we
 " shall be accessory to her's. Let me
 " know how you proceed in this business,
 " and, if occasion require, and my ill-
 " ness give me leave, I will come my-
 " self to Elvas.

" VILAREZO"

While Sebastiano was consulting how to set his sister Berinthia at liberty, let us speak a little of Catalina, who, finding her treachery and bloody purposes revealed, contrived with herself to make

away with Anfilva, that she might tell no tales; to which end she sent for a quack, one Pedro Sermiata, who, for a reward of one hundred ducats, undertook to dispatch her, which he effected by giving her a poison, that her mistress prevailed upon her to take, in hopes of curing two or three ugly red pimples on her face. Thus did this graceless wretch, by the providence of Almighty God, meet with the same death which she had, in vain, twice attempted to give to the virtuous and innocent Berinthia!

Sebastiano, in the mean time, having received his father's order, at Elvas, by the hands of his kinsman Villandras, sent him to know Antonio's and Berinthia's last resolution; who, being admitted into the castle, first directed his speech to Berinthia, and then to Antonio, and informed them of his message. Berinthia desired her cousin Villandras to give her best respects to her brother, but withal to acquaint him, that her first answer and resolution, were and should be her last: and Antonio prayed him likewise to inform Sebastiano, that Berinthia's will was his law, and her resolution his; and that he was ready at all times to venture his own life in defence of her's.

Villandras returning, acquainted Sebastiano with their last resolves, from which, he said, it seemed impossible to dissuade or divert them. This occasioned many conflicts in the breast of Sebastiano, between love and honour, friendship and duty, which made him irresolute, whether he should undertake to recover his sister by law or arms; the first he thought both scandalous and cowardly; and by the latter he foresaw, that he must either be killed himself, or kill his friend. The first

first would make him the jest of Antonio; and not to attempt the second, a shame to himself and family. Therefore, giving more way to the warm sentiments of pride, and what is falsely called honour, than to the cooler dictates of reason, he determined to fight him; and making choice of his cousin Villandras for his second, he sent him the next morning into the castle, with the following challenge:

SEBASTIANO to ANTONIO.

" I Must either return with my sister
" Berinthia to Averro, or leave my
" own life at Elvas; for I had rather
" die, than live to see her Dishonour,
" since her's is mine: neither is it I, but
" yourself, that have infringed and vio-
" lated the bonds of our friendship.
" Therefore resolve, before six of the
" clock to-morrow morning, either to
" restore my sister Berinthia, or at that
" hour to meet me on foot, with your
" second, in the square green meadow,
" under your own castle, where the
" choice of two single rapiers shall be
" your's. If you are honourable, you
" will grant my first, or if brave, you
" will not refuse my second request.

" SEBASTIANO."

Antonio having received this challenge, sent Sebastiano for answer, that he could not grant him his first request; but he would not deny him his second. He carried the matter very privately, especially to Berinthia, who little suspected the danger she had brought both her lover and her brother into.

Antonio, on this occasion, made choice of a cousin-german of his own, a valiant young gentleman, named Belasco, to be his second; and meeting Villandras secretly that night in the city, there they chose rapiers, and settled some other ceremonies customary in duels.

The morning being come, our combatants leaped from their beds to the field, where, a little before six, the appointed hour, all parties appeared. The seconds performed their offices of visiting the principals, who, putting off their doublets, proceeded to the business; and, at the first close, Antonio was wounded in the right arm, and Sebastiano in the left side, by a thrust glancing on a rib; at the second, Sebastiano wounded Antonio betwixt the breast and shoulder, a little above his right pap, and Antonio ran him clean through the body, making a large and dangerous wound, from whence there issued much blood, so parting for a while and taking breath; then fell to it again, and at the third close, Sebastiano repaid Antonio with a fatal interest, for he ran him through the body on the left side, a little below the heart; whereupon he first staggered, and then falling, was pinned to the ground by his antagonist. Belasco, no way daunted at the misfortune and death of his principal; as soon as he had covered the body over with his cloak, he unsheathed his rapier, and bidding Villandras to be on his guard, wounded him slightly on the shoulder, but was himself run through the body and reins; upon which he fell to the ground, and with a feint voice, begged his life of Villandras, who, throwing away his rapier, stooped to assist him, but in vain,

T

for

for his soul was now departed to another world.

This tragical news was soon carried to Antonio's castle, where his and Belasco's dead bodies were conveyed, to the great grief of all his domesticks, who wept bitterly for the untimely end of their worthy and generous master; but all their tears were nothing to those of Antonio's two sisters, nor theirs any thing in comparison of those shed by the sweet Berinthia, who was no sooner acquainted with the fate of her beloved Antonio, than she fell to the ground, like one dead herself, but soon revived to fresh torments, which were occasioned by the mournful sight of her bleeding Antonio. She wrung her hands, tore her hair, beat her breast, and sent forth such actions of distracted grief, that even cruelty itself could not forbear to pity; no advice could prevail upon her to moderate her sorrows, but she threw herself upon the breathless corpse, and, bathing its wounds with tears, cried out, "O my Antonio, my dear, dear Antonio! I would to heaven my death could have prevented thine! O what is life, without my dear, dear Antonio?"

In the midst of these passionate throws, her brother Sebastiano came as a victor, to demand her at the castle-gate, but finding the draw-bridge up, and all the avenues strongly baricadoed, went and craved the assistance of the criminal judges, who sent the provost, with a company of armed soldiers, when applying a Petard to the gate, soon forced it open; then was the sorrowful Berinthia delivered into the hands of her brother, who, with the tenderest advice, and most sweet persuasions, entreated her to dry away her tears; but so deep was her sorrow, that

she would admit of no consolation. Indeed she could not look upon her brother with an eye of affection, but of revenge and indignation; and had the strength of her body been equal to the fury in her breast, she would no doubt that instant have called him to a severe account for the loss of her lover.

Sebastiano having left the dead bodies of Antonio and Belasco to the care of their friends, and taking coach with his incensed and sorrowful sister, returned to Avero, where his father Vilarezo, and his mother Aliphanta welcomed him home with pleasure and commendation; but met their daughter Berinthia with frowns and reproaches, and she, the best she could, endeavoured to smother her discontent, but to herself vowed vengeance on her hated brother for the murder of her dear Antonio. But, alas, if Berinthia had submitted to the will of heaven, and had considered that vows of this nature were much better broke than kept, we had not found her so miserable, as she will soon appear.

Catalina, seeing the object of her affection, Antonio, dead, and her sister Berinthia returned, who was, on his account only, the object of her hatred and malice, secretly confessed to her the guilt of her intentions, in twice attempting to poison her, by the help of Ansilva her maid, for which she intreated forgiveness, and vowing, that she would henceforth convert her malice into the sincerest affection; thus reconciled herself to her,

But although Catalina had made peace with her sister, she had concluded none with God, for the murder of Ansilva; earth might have forgot this murder, but heaven

heaven never could : God's judgments are as just as secret, and he hath a thousand means of punishment, when we think ourselves safest and farthest from it, which may partly be seen by the sequel of this story.

A sister of Anfilva's, named Isabella, being to be married in Averro, invited the ladies Catalina and Berinthia to her wedding ; but Berinthia was too sorrowful to attend an entertainment of that kind, and was more desirous of being in her own grave, than at another's nuptials : so Catalina, without her, took coach, with intent to accompany the bride to church, but see how the vengeance and justice of God stopt her on the way ; for she had not got far before the sun was instantly eclipsed, the whole face of the heavens darkened, and a most terrible clap of thunder struck her with such violence, that it laid her almost dead at the bottom of the coach, whilst neither her maid, in the coach with her, nor the coachman or footmen without, received any manner of hurt ; so they returned home, and the young lady being put to bed, her body all above the waist was found as black as a coal.

The best physicians and surgeons in the city being immediately sent for, but finding her death-struck, and all their skill of no service ; therefore the physician of the soul, a worthy divine, was next desired to attend her, and prepare her for another world : and the lady herself, seeing it to no purpose to dissemble any longer, confessed her having twice procured her woman, Anfilva, to undertake to poison her sister, and that she had afterwards given Sermiata an hundred ducats to poison Anfilva, for which heinous

crimes she heartily asked pardon of God, and seemed to die with great penitence for her past offences.

Vilarezo and Alphanta, her aged parents, grieved very much at her death, but much more at the manner of it, and especially at the knowledge of her horrid crimes, which they were ashamed to publish to the world ; but yet were forced to it, that Sarmiata, that agent of hell, might be brought to justice to receive the punishment due to his iniquities. They applied therefore to the criminal judges, who ordered him to be apprehended ; he was at this time revelling and feasting at the wedding of Isabella, when news was brought of the sudden death of Catalina, which astonished every one, but especially Sermiata, whose conscience flying in his face, and whose fear suggesting to him the apprehension of her having made some discoveries, thought it advisable to fly and provide for his safety, but was prevented in his design by the officers, who, at that instant rushing into the house, made him their prisoner.

In the afternoon, the judges examined him upon the poisoning Anfilva, and concerning the hundred ducats he had received on that account from Catalina, which she confessed on her death-bed ; but he denied both, with many oaths and dreadful imprecations ; however these availed not much, for the judges ordered the torture to be given him, upon which he confessed his guilt, and was condemned to be hanged, which was done accordingly the next morning, before Vilarezo's house, on a gibbet, purposely erected, and died desperately without repentance, or asking pardon either of God or man.

Catalina's

Catalina's confession and death was not capable to deface and wash away Berinthia's malice towards her brother Sebastiano, for the remembrance of her dear Antonio being still fresh in her thoughts, and his loved idea ever in her mind. 'Tis true, Sebastiano was her brother, but it was as true, she said to herself, that Antonio, if he had not killed him, would have stood in a nearer relation to her, that of a husband. She had vowed revenge, and therefore took this method to satisfy it; about ten days after the death of Catalina, she provided herself with a long sharp knife, and hiding it in the sleeve of her gown, entered very early one morning into her brother's chamber, with her lute in her hand, resolving, if he had been awake, to tell him she came to bid him good-morrow with a lesson on her lute; when finding him fast asleep, she softly laid her musical instrument down in the window, and drawing forth that of her revenge, she was not contentd to cut his throat from ear to ear, but afterwards stabbed him in several parts of the body, and as near the heart as she could.

This poor gentleman turned twice in his bed, but never spoke or stirred more: this wretched sister, then taking up her lute, went softly out of the room, yet not so softly but that Philippo, Sebastiano's page, who laid in a chamber near him, hearing a noise, leaped out of bed, and taking his cloak on his shoulder, and his rapier in his hand, ran just time enough to see Berinthia re-enter her own chamber, and shut the door after her; then running to his master's bed-side, he beheld the butchered body, which made him cry out in such a manner as alarmed the whole

house. Berinthia immediately pulled off her outward taffata gown all sprinkled with blood, and wrapping up her bloody knife in it, privately conveyed them both into the close-stool, and so waited the coming up of her father and mother, who were not long before the sorrowful news of their son's murder had brought them into his chamber, whither likewise Berinthia came all drowned in tears. Every one was amazed at the sight of this bloody and mangled corps; and the servants flew from place to place to hunt the murderer out, but found no one, nor the prints of any drops or stains of blood: but Philippo the page, cried out, he was afraid it was Berinthia, who had been his master's murderer, for that he saw her flying to her chamber, as he came thither. Vilarezo and Alphanta his wife, were doubly amazed at this report; Berinthia no way daunted or astonished at it, but affirmed, that she likewise heard some noise in her brother's chamber, which made her rise and come to the door, and seeing Philippo, she being in her night attire, thought it but modesty to go back into her chamber. —For the present they all believed her words, and the circumstances of her excuse, but would not proclaim her innocence till they had searched her chamber, and every chest and trunk therein, where, finding no knife, filletto, or other offensive weapon, her father and mother were ready to acquit her, but so was not God: for the criminal judges being made acquainted with the business, and coming to visit the dead body, when they had heard what Philippo had to say, and considered the circumstances of her love for Antonio, and of his being
killed

killed by this brother of her's, they had so strong a suspicion of Berinthia, that they committed her to close prison, not regarding the quality or the tears of her parents; and gave her till the next day to consider of the answer she was to make them.

By this time all Avero rung with the news of this bloody and unnatural murder; every one bewailed the death of Sebastiano, who was a gentleman truly noble and generous, but his father and mother were almost distracted with the misfortunes that came so quick upon them, one after the other: they were unwilling to believe, yet greatly feared their daughter Berinthia was the murderer of her brother.

The next morning the judges being met, sent for Berinthia, who came accompanied by her parents and kinsfolks, to be examined, and was confronted by Philippo; she was firm in her denial, and her judges found some circumstances, but no positive evidence against her, she was adjudged to the torture; but one of the judges pitying her descent, her youth and beauty, as much as he detested the crime she was charged with, begged that her chamber might be more strictly searched before she was put on the rack. This request was heard and followed with approbation. He and two other of her friends repaired to Vilarezo's house, and to Berinthia's chamber, where, having searched most carefully all other places, they came at length to the close-stool, which, for want of a key they broke open, and found her bloody gown, in which was wrapped the hellish knife, wherewith she perpetrated this inhuman

murder on the body of her only brother.

No sooner were these evidences produced against her, but she owned her crime, and with many tears, repented of what she had done, adding, that her love to Antonio had hurried her on to this revenge on her brother.

And, therefore, she besought her judges to have compassion on her youth; but this was too foul a crime to admit of any excuse, and so sentence was passed upon her, viz. "That the next morning she should be hanged in the publick Market-Place."

All praised God for the detection of this sad murder, and for the condemnation of the execrable murderers; and those who before looked on her youth and beauty with pity and compassion, now beheld her foul crime with hatred and detestation: those who applauded the sincerity of her affection to Antonio, were yet shocked at her malice and cruelty to her brother: but, O! what grief could be equal to that of her parents? whose age was borne down with such variety of afflictions, such as made them with themselves buried, or that their children had never been born. They had already tasted of bitterest grief for the death of their daughter Catalina, then of their son Sebastiano; but who could express the distraction of their mind at the thoughts of having this, their last and only child, end her days in so ignominious a manner? the halter they imagine would cast such a blemish on the lustre of their ancient blood, as no time could ever wipe off; they therefore tried all mortal means to have their daughter's sentence changed to

one more honourable; and, at last, by their great interest, and in consideration of their high rank, of the youth and beauty of the young lady, and with some regard to her fervent affection to Antonio, they prevailed so far, that, although the gibbet was erected, and almost all the people of Avero were assembled to behold the execution, her sentence was altered to that of being immured between two walls, and there with a slender diet to end the remainder of her days, which indeed were but few, for being unaccustomed to be pent up in so strait a place, together with the troubles and anxieties of her mind, she was thrown into a yellow jaundice, and then a burning fever,

which put a period to her miserable days.

Lo! these were the bitter fruits of revenge and murder which the perpetrators, by the just judgment of God, were enforced to taste, and which, when in the heat of their youth, and height of their impiety, they little thought on. By the sight of which great effusion of blood, yea, by all those mournful events, if we will but direct our contemplations and affections from earth to heaven, we shall then as true Christians, and sons of the eternal God, run the race of our mortality in peace in this world, and consequently be rewarded, through the merits of our Redeemer, with a glorious crown of immortal felicity in that to come.



4 A





GOD's REVENGE

AGAINST

MURDER and ADULTERY.

HISTORY VIII.

ARGUMENT.

Belvile treacherously murders Poligny in the Street. Laurieta, Poligny's Mistress, decoys Belvile to her Chamber, and there, in Revenge, shoots him through the Body with a Pistol; and assisted by her Waiting-Maid, Lucilla, gives him also many Wounds with a Poinard. Lucilla, flying for this, is drowned in a Lake; and Laurieta hanged and burnt for the same.

IN the beautiful city of Avignon in France, being the capital of the duchy of Venissa, belonging to the Pope, and wherein, for almost the term of eighty years, was held the Pontifical See, there dwelt a young lady of about twenty years of age, named Laurieta, whose father and mother being dead, was left alone their heir, but richer in beauty than lands, and endowed with many qualifications and perfections, that gave grace and lustre to her beauty: for she was so well versed in the Latin and Italian

tongues, that she could speak them both fluently and correctly, and was very expert and excellent in painting, singing, dancing, and musick of two or three kinds, so that her fame was spread throughout the city. But as there need but one vice to eclipse and drown many virtues, so to the destruction of all her good qualities, Laurieta was more beautiful than chaste, more fair than virtuous.

Her father and mother had taken great pains to train her up in the school of virtue and piety; but when it pleased the
fove-

sovereign judge of the world to take them out of this life, poor Laurieta was left to the wide world without a guide, and, as a poor vessel, wanting a pilot to direct her course, was soon thrown against the rocks of pleasure and incontinence.

The person on whom she bestowed the greatest share of her favours, was one Monsieur Belvile, a handsome young gentleman, dwelling near the city of Arles, of noble birth and extraction, who was so much enamoured of her, that he consumed not only the greatest part of his time, but his fortune likewise upon her. And thinking himself master of so rich a prize, he could not help vaunting of it, among some of his companions, which coming to Laurieta's ears, who was more careful to preserve the reputation of her chastity, than the thing itself, she not only reproached him for the liberty he had taken, but forbade him her company; this might have been a fit and happy opportunity for him to have shook off her wanton chains, but he was too dissolute in his morals, and too much a slave to his inordinate desires to think of repentance, and leading a new course of life, for he not only resolved to justify himself to his darling mischief, but to persevere in his sin. So after many letters, and many presents, he was again received into favour, but with this premonition, that if ever she should hear of any folly or ingratitude of the same kind, she would never look him in the face.

About this time a gay young gentleman of Montpellier, named Poligny, arrived, on some business at Avignon, where, frequenting the publick balls and assemblies, seeing the beautiful Laurieta, whom no sooner he beheld but he fell in love

with her. He tried all manner of ways to gain her affection, but found her so averse to his suit, that neither prayers, sighs, letters, or presents, were capable of purchasing her favour. Poligny was infinitely grieved at this, which did but make the flame of his love burn with the greater fury, and set his invention the more at work to find out means of satisfying his desires: when lo! an occasion presented itself most unexpectedly.

Mademoiselle Palaifiere, a young lady of great fortune, living near Pont-Saint-Espirit, in Avignon, seeing Poligny at a ball, fell violently in love with him, to such a degree, that had not modesty withheld her, she would have proved her own advocate, and informed him thereof herself. Poligny having received so many secret signs and testimonies of her affection, by private glances and the like, could not be ignorant of their meaning; but his own love or rather lust to Laurieta, had taken such an entire possession of him, that it left no place or corner for Palaifiere, who knowing that Laurieta was the mistress of Belvile, resolved some how or other to acquaint Poligny with it, in hopes thereby to withdraw his affections from her to herself. About three days after she had taken this resolution, a comedy was acted by the Jesuits scholars in Avignon, which drew together all the nobility and gentry, not only of the city, but adjacent country; and hither came Poligny in hopes of seeing Laurieta; and Palaifiere in hopes of seeing Poligny; but Laurieta that day having been taken ill, Belvile continued with her to comfort her, so Poligny not finding Laurieta, sat down very pensively; but Palaifiere seeing him, was chearful, and took

took care to place herself close to him, and making some advances first, it was not possible for him to avoid entering into a conversation with her, in which she gave him to understand, that she knew of his affection for Lauretta, and withal, that Belvile was her servant and favourite, and no other.

This information gave Poligny so much uneasiness, that he was not able to sit the play out, but pretending to be taken ill on a sudden, left the place, and went home, where a thousand jealous thoughts perplexed and tormented him. However he resolved to be satisfied of the truth of what he had been told, and so having contrived to get to the speech of Lucilla, Lauretta's maid, whom, by the help of a little gold, he soon won over to betray all her mistress's secrets. She told him, it was true Belvile was at present her chief favourite, yet, that it was but the other day, that having through vanity, or in his cups, let fall some words to her dishonour, he was very near being cashiered.

Poligny hearing this, and having been told by others of the vanity and weakness of Belvile, resolved to lay a trap for him, whereby he might expose him to his mistress, and, if he should be once able to unhorse him, made no doubt of getting himself into his saddle. To this end, finding means to get acquainted with him, he became in a short time so intimate, that they rid, fenced, danced, drank and hunted together. Poligny one day telling Belvile that he had never seen the city of Orange, asked his company to go with him thither, along with two more friends, named La Fontaine and Borelles, to which he very willingly and readily consented.

Next morning they all took horse, Belvile having been first to take leave of Lauretta, and to let her know of his journey.

Being got thither, and having taken a view of this old city, the ancient patrimony, and principality of the illustrious princes of Orange, they visited the castle, saw part of the amphitheatre still standing, the cathedral church, the double wall of the town, and the old Roman arch; where, having satisfied their curiosity, retired to their inn to dinner; which being over, they liberally put about the glass.

Poligny, now as malicious in his heart as he was pleasant in his countenance and conversation, threw forth his lure to ensnare Belvile: "How happy, quoth he, are the gentlemen of Italy, compared with us of France, since they, after dinner, every one may go to his Courtezana without controul." "I know not, said La Fontaine, what there are in Orange here, but I think at Avignon, we are not destitute of freehearted wenches." "No, surely, quoth Belvile, I am confident it may, in that particular, be set in competition with any city of Italy; for, I dare say, from the lady to the most menial servant, they will all prove tractable." "Except, answered Borelles, our holy sisters the nuns." "No faith, replied Belvile, I will except none, not even my own mistress; though she would take it ill to be told, that she had to do with any but myself." "Indeed, said Poligny, if I knew you had a mistress of that complexion, I should be glad to toast her health; but you banter us, you have none." "No, an-

" swered Belvile, with an air of French
 " vanity, then I do aver, that I have a
 " mistress, whose beauty and accomplish-
 " ments any man might be proud to ad-
 " mire, and whose name can bring no
 " shame to the man who is happy in
 " her esteem; and so, if you design to
 " do me honour by drinking her health,
 " I proclaim mademoiselle Laurieta to
 " be my mistress, and myself her ser-
 " vant."

This was enough for Poligny, who had now answered his design of coming to Orange, and in the Evening they all returned to Avignon. Poligny could hardly sleep that night for the joy he had in thinking how fine an opportunity he had of ruining Belvile, in the opinion of his mistress; and as soon as morning appeared, he sent his lacquey away with the following billet:

POLIGNY to LAURIETA.

" MADAM,

" **I**T is out of my sincere affection
 " to you, and, indeed, my premeditated malice to Belvile, whom I must hate on your account, that I now give you the trouble of this, to acquaint you, with how much indecency I heard him lately treat your character and reputation, at Orange, where we dined together. I know it is not only becoming, but really the duty of a gentleman, to be rather cautious to preserve the honour and secrets of a lady, than thus wantonly, and ungratefully to betray them.

" The just notion I have always endeavoured to maintain of honour and truth, would oblige me to acquaint

" any lady with an abuse of this kind:
 " how much more than am I bound to do it to you, for whom I have more respect than for all the world beside?
 " what my pen now affirms to you, my sword is ready to justify to Belvile, and shew how much less he is deserving of your esteem than

" POLIGNY."

Laurieta, at the receipt of this letter, was torn and tossed by a thousand jarring passions: revenge she was resolved on, but, in the mean time, before she could determine how to execute it, thought herself obliged to send the following answer to Poligny's letter:

LAURIETA to POLIGNY.

" SIR,

" **I** know not whether you have given me a greater proof of your own discretion and affection, or of Belvile's vanity and baseness. As I think myself infinitely obliged to you for your care of my reputation, so will I shortly let him know what he deserves for the liberty he has taken with it.
 " I am well satisfied of the truth of what you have wrote with your pen, and desire not to have it confirmed by your sword. You may depend upon it, that one who can be guilty of a meanness like this of Belvile's, can never have spirit enough to justify himself by the way of arms. I return you many thanks for this kind office, which, though I cannot requite, I should be glad to deserve.

" LAURIETA."

Laurieta

Laurieta having dispatched this letter to Poligny, sent a messenger privately for Belville, who flew as usual to her summons, and not dreaming of his own folly or Poligny's treachery at Orange, expected to be received with open arms: but how were his hopes deceived when he met her with lightning in her eyes, and, with thunder in her voice; she charged him with the villainous slander of his tongue, and the vile aspersions he had cast upon her honour, in company with Poligny, and others at Orange, "Is this, said she, the reward a lady is to expect for imparting her favours to a gentleman? Or is this the part of a gentleman to erect trophies of glory to himself, on the disgrace of his mistress? Are these the fruits of your sighs, tears, and letters? Had I a dagger in my hand, I would this instant bury it in thy false and treacherous heart." Belville, amazed at this violent transport of her anger, with many oaths and dreadful imprecations, denied that he had been guilty of any thing like what she charged him with; but Laurieta was not to be so satisfied, and in order to make his guilt the more notorious, and strike him dumb at once, she produced Poligny's letter, upon the sight and perusal of which he hung his head, and seemed for a while under the greatest confusion, but recovering himself soon after, he protested it was all a forgery to supplant him in her good graces, and boldly denied the contents of it: this was not capable to appease Laurieta, nor would any thing, except he justified her honour and his own innocence by a combat or duel with Poligny: thus Belville, seeing himself drove to this sad dilemma, either that he must lose his

mistress, or run the hazard of his life; and, to speak the truth, being not one who delighted much in feats of chivalry, the thoughts of meeting an armed man in the field, was not at all pleasant to him: but gathering some comfort to himself on this reflection, that as several of his companions had as little courage as himself, it was not impossible but Poligny likewise, might have no relish to a business of that sort, so, knowing it was in vain for him to attempt seeing his mistress, whom he sincerely loved, till he had met Poligny, he plucked up his spirits, and wrote him this challenge:

BELVILLE to POLIGNY.

"**H**OW odious and detestable are your malice and treachery, which, while I was cultivating your friendship, have basely betrayed me to my mistress, and falsely accused me of saying such things against her, whose honour I will maintain to the last drop of blood in my body. Therefore, think it not strange that I require satisfaction from you, and that you meet me to-morrow morning, without seconds, on the bridge, by the iron stump, the limits betwixt the king and the pope, with your single rapier; where I will attend you with another; of which two you may take your choice, and give me the refusal. Sleep not too much this night, for in the morn I doubt not but to send you to your eternal rest.

"BELVILLE."

Poligny, on receiving this challenge, was struck with admiration at Belville's resolu-

resolution, which he could never have expected from all the former accounts he had heard of him: however he was pleased at it, and thinking himself now seated in Laurieta's affection, was willing to give any proof of his regard to her.

But the night brought cool reflection to Belvile, who now withed the challenge unsent, but it being out of his hands, there was no recalling it: so morning being come, they were both on the spot. Belvile, who could be valorous in words, offered Poligny, according to his challenge, and the right of duels, the fight and choice of his rapier. Poligny was too brave to die in his debt, in point of honour; therefore offered his, telling him, he was contented with the refusal. Thus courtesy having a while contended with valour, they both assumed their own rapiers, then, separating from each other, began the combat: Poligny gave Belvile the first wound in his right shoulder, without receiving any himself; and, at the next thrust, a wound in the left side, without Belvile's having so much as touched his cloaths, whereupon Belvile, throwing away his sword, begged Poligny to desist, saying, he held himself satisfied. Poligny scorned to take advantage of a naked man, or doing any thing to stain his honour, therefore he gave Belvile his life, and received his shame and submission for it.

Two soldiers from the castle-walls having seen what passed, and knowing the gentlemen, the news of this duel was presently spread all over the city, upon which Laurieta sent to Belvile; but his shame was so great, that he was not at present to be seen or spoken to; and then she was just taking pen in hand to write to

Poligny, to be informed of the particulars of it, when he himself coming into her chamber, where, after some compliments passed, he informed her that he had given Belvile two wounds for her sake, and his life for his own. She enquired if he had received no hurt himself, and was pleased to understand he had not: and, in token of her thankfulness, permitted him to gather many kisses, as well from the roses of her cheeks, as from the cherries of her lips. He from henceforth vowed to be her faithful servant, and she, if she consented not to be his mistress, promised to be his friend.

Whilst Laurieta and Poligny were triumphing in Belvile's foil, how was it possible for him not to grieve at the loss of Laurieta, or for Palaisiere not to be as much concerned to see herself deprived of all hopes of enjoying her dear Poligny? But their griefs were differently expressed, Palaisiere was bathing her cheeks in tears, while Belvile was resolving to quench his revenge in the blood of Poligny? henceforth his thoughts were so distracted, and his looks so wild and ghastly, that his companions could not help taking notice of them, as did Palaisiere, whose company he sometimes sought, not so much out of affection to her, as by way of consolation, it being natural to find some comfort in the converse of those whose distresses are of the same kind with our own. Palaisiere, though slighted and disdained by Poligny, was still so watchful for his safety, that she thought it her duty to let him know what she had discovered from some words, dropped by Belvile, of the malicious designs he was hatching in his mind, and so wrote him the following letter:

PALASIERE

PALASIERE to POLIGNY.

"**T**HAT I may give you a proof of that constant affection which you slight, I cannot forbear acquainting you, that you have great reason to be upon your guard against Belvile, who, I know, by some words dropt, has a secret design upon your life. How little regard soever you have for me, yet such is my esteem for you, that any misfortune befalling Poligny could not more afflict him, than

"PALASIERE."

Poligny having read this letter, laughed at Palasiere's foolish affection for him, and at Belvile's malice: but being now so besotted with the love of Laurieta, he kept no secret from her, and shewed her this letter, which made sport for them both. However, as a gentleman, he thought himself obliged, in point of good manners, to send an answer to Palasiere, which he did to this effect:

POLIGNY to PALASIERE.

"**I**T is not the least of my joys that Belvile's malice cannot be so great as I find your affection; but I am sorry to say, I have not deserved your love any more than his hatred: but it is not impossible that I may sometime or other merit the one, as much as I despise the other.

"POLIGNY."

Poligny having sent away this letter, thought no more of the advice given him by Palasiere, to be upon his guard, but, revelling in the charms of Laurieta, neg-

lected all other considerations; while Belvile, forgetting all grace and even humanity, gave himself over to the devil, and fixed the resolution, the bloody resolution of Poligny's death.

Belvile, the better to colour his villany, retired from Avignon, and lived five or six days at Orange, giving out that he was gone to the city of Aix in Provence, at the parliament of which place he had shortly a title to be tried for some land in dispute; and in a dark night, taking none but his lacquey with him, he passed the gate of Avignon, and giving the servant his horse to hold, went privately to the corner of a street near Laurieta's house, where he was informed Poligny staid late every night; and, hiding his naked sword under his cloak, waited his coming out, which was about One of the clock in the morning.

Poligny was no sooner in the street, but Belvile, like a murderous villain as he was, rushing out of his lurking place, sheathed his sword in his breast. Poligny endeavoured to close with the assassin, and cried out for help, but all in vain, the dead of the night favoured the murderer's design; then drawing his sword out, and Poligny being faint and weak with the loss of blood, he fell helpless down upon the ground, when the murderer, redoubling his cruelty, run him through the small of his back and reins, which, with a groan or two, put an end to his life. Belvile being satisfied he had dispatched him, hastened to his horse, which his servant was holding, and passing through the same gate he came in at, posted with all expedition to Orange, from whence, in the morning, he went to Aix.

Y

But

But before this time, the neighbours in the street at Avignon, where Laurieta dwelt, had taken the alarm at this tragical event, and candles and torches were brought out from every house. Laurieta, who had just before been playing the whore, at this time willing to appear more orderly than all others, and that it might not be known either she or any of her house were stirring, would not, like an ungrateful strumpet, for a long time permit any of her servants to go into the street. The criminal judge, and president of the city, being advertised of this murder, came to view the body, and found it to be Poligny, who, as he was greatly beloved, was now much lamented by all who knew him. The lieutenant criminal, like an honest man, and one fit for the office which he held, made a very strict enquiry after the murderer, but as yet to no purpose; the Lord's appointed time not being yet come for the discovery.

Laurieta knew full well that this execrable murder could be perpetrated by none but Belville; so love and revenge conspired to act a double part in her breast: the first made her weep, and infinitely deplore the loss of Poligny; the other vowed to be revenged on his murderer Belville, and to dry her tears in his blood. He, in the mean time, was triumphing at Aix, and glorying in the deed he had done, and only repented that he had not performed it sooner. But lest any enquiry should be made after him, and this affair examined into at Aix, taking horse he rode to Lyons, accompanied only by his two lacqueys, who indeed had no hand in the murder of Poligny, nor were any way privy to it.

From thence he went to Paris, where, giving a loose to every folly that vanity could suggest to him, in about six months, he having squandered in dissipation the greatest part of what gold he had carried with him, and finding his credit there not so well established as he expected, was therefore obliged to think of returning to Provence; previous to which, he wrote a letter to Laurieta, his long absence from her having now added fresh vigour to his flame, and being impatient to be blest, as he thought it, with the sight of her, dispatched one of his lacqueys to Avignon for money, which he was ordered to bring to him at Lyons; but above all other affairs, he was to take especial care to deliver the following letter to Laurieta:

BELVILLE to LAURIETA.

" IF Belville had but had a thousandth part of so much honour as I had love for you, you would not so soon have cast me out of your favour, nor, perhaps, might he have been so soon cast out of the world. Notwithstanding which, I grieve at his untimely death, and though he bore so much malice to me, yet; if I was sure you loved him, as I think you did, for your sake I should be glad to fight his murderer.

" This rival out of the way, could I hope to regain your favour, which I lost so unjustly and unfortunately, I would forsake Paris for Avignon, and abandoning all the beauties in the world, pay to Laurieta only, the homage that is due from

" BELVILLE."

With

With this letter he sent a diamond ring from his finger, both which the lackey very secretly delivered to Laurieta, who, to disguise the bloody treachery in her heart, kissed them, and pretended great joy at hearing from Belvile, concerning whose welfare and return, she asked many questions of the lackey, who, being taught his lesson, told her, that that depended on her pleasure, and that his master only waited for the commands he should carry him in her answer to his letter, which he begged she would have the goodness to get ready against he set out for Paris, which would be in two days.

The lackey being gone, she could not forbear laughing to herself, to see how Belvile was again besotted, and how eager he was to run on his own destruction: for the devil had fortified her in her former resolution, she was thirsting for his blood, and impatient till she could finish the tragedy she had begun in her thoughts. In the mean time, she prepared a treacherous letter, with a present of an embroidered scarf to deliver to the lackey for his master, with her best services; and bade him to tell him she hoped to see him shortly at Avignon. The lackey having these and his master's money, which he sent for, hastened to Lyons, where Belvile was privately in a friend's house; he greatly rejoiced at the return of his servant, but hardly more pleased at the receipt of the money, than of the following letter from his mistress:

LAURIETA to BELVILE.

"AS I freely acknowledge I loved
" Poligny, so I confess I never
" hated you; and if his insinuations

" were too prevalent with my credulity,
" I beseech you attribute it to the weak-
" nesses of my sex; but since I find he was
" not reserved for me, depend upon it,
" I am wholly for you; I wish our A-
" vignon was nearer to Paris; but if your
" love be as unfeigned as mine, you will
" hasten to Laurieta, who will rejoice a
" thousand times more at your return,
" than ever she grieved at the death of
" Poligny.

" LAURIETA."

Upon reading this letter, Belvile was beyond himself, and his joy being so great, he could think of nothing but Laurieta, and wished for nothing but to be in her arms; in order to which, he bought a couple of new horses, put his lackies in fresh liveries, and, believing that time and his absence had worn out the remembrance of Poligny's murder, hastened away to Avignon, where the first night of his arrival, he visited Laurieta, who, with the treachery of an harlot, received him with many feigned transports and endearments, and then promised to give him all the happiness in her power to bestow; but for that time they parted, after millions of kisses had passed between them; the next day he came again, and found her in the same kind humour, when in the midst of his professions of love and constancy, and the mighty things he would do, and had done for her sake, she drew the secret from him of his having been the murderer of Poligny; this confirming her malice to him, hastened her putting in execution the design she had against his life. She observed, that he always carried a pistol about him, and asking the meaning of it, he told her, it was to defend himself against his ene-
mies.

mies, and that he never intended to go without it: and then again, they fell to kisses and embraces. He strongly solicited her to farther and sweeter enjoyments, which for that time she denied him, but said, if he would come to her in the afternoon the next day, she would resign herself entirely to his pleasure; being satisfied, nay, transported with this promise, he returned home, and while he was pleasing himself with the expectation of the next day's raptures, she was ruminating on the manner of his death, and thought no way could be fitter to dispatch him, than with his own pistol. She was of opinion, that it would be impossible to be done without the assistance of her chambermaid, Lucilla, of whom mention has been made before, and so acquainted her with her design, and with a fair purse of gold, a temptation that few chambermaids can resist, and with many promises of future favours, she drew her in to consent to be an accomplice with her in the murder, and enjoined her to provide herself with a good poinard, to be hid under her gown, and be ready if they should have need of it.

Belvile, who could hardly sleep the night before, for the thoughts of the happiness he expected, to be sure was not backward when the time came that he was to meet his fair devil, but then, and indeed sooner than the time appointed, he took his horse and two lackies, saying, he would ride a little way out of town for the air, but call at Laurieta's as he passed by: so lighting at the door, and without the least apprehension of any danger near him, went very joyfully into Laurieta's chamber, who, with all the arts of a dis-

sembling prostitute, met him with open arms; and, the better to smother her murderous intent, was not only prodigal in receiving, but giving him kisses.

Belvile then whispered in her ear, that he was now come to receive the fruits of her promise the day before; and she answered him, that it was not in her power to refuse him any thing, only prayed him to send away his servants, because their familiarity needed no witnesses. So while he was calling to them, and ordering them to go to the gate that lead to Marfeilles, there to wait his coming, Laurieta stepped to her maid Lucilla, bade her to make ready her poinard, and stand close to her; for now, said she, the hour is come, in which I will be revenged on Belvile for the death of my dear Poligny. She had no sooner said this, but Belvile returned to her, when, redoubling their kisses, and little thinking how near he was to his end, he began to draw towards the chamber, which she treacherously said was prepared for him; and taking off his pistol, laid it on a table in the room where they were. She seeing this instrument, which she had a great desire to make use of, took it in her hand, and desiring him to shew her how to fire it, he told her he would discharge it before her if she pleased: why, said she, is it charged? yes, replied Belvile, with a single bullet. Pray then, said she, put in another, and if you can see a crow on the house, or church top, you shall see me act the man and shoot it off. Belvile desirous to please her in any thing, looked out of the window, and seeing two crows on the cross of the Augustine friars church, informed her very joyfully of it; then clapping a second bullet in the pistol, as she

she desired, delivered it into the hand of Laurieta, who desired him to lean out of the window, that he might see how near she could feather them.

The deceived gentleman accordingly stooped down, and she, at the same instant, discharged the pistol directly into his reins; whereupon he staggered, and Lucilla, seconding her bloody mistress, stepped in, and with her poniard, gave him five or six wounds quite through the body; so that without speaking or groaning, he fell down dead at their feet. Laurieta, exulting in the horrible crime which she had just committed, uttered these prophane words: "O my Poligny! whilst thou art an angel in heaven, this I have done on earth for thy sake, and in revenge of thy death!"

After this execrable murder was committed, the mistress and maid, in hopes of concealing it from the eye of justice, dragged his breathless body, reeking in its own gore, down stairs, into an obscure cellar, and there making a shallow grave, buried it in its cloaths, and piling a large quantity of billets upon it, left it under this wooden monument.

The two servants having staid at the city gate with their master's horses till night, returned to enquire for him at Laurieta's, where they had left him; but she told them, that he had not tarried there above an hour after them: they then returned to his lodging, and wait between hope and fear, for his coming home; but two days being elapsed without any news of him, they thought it adviseable to acquaint some gentlemen, his most intimate friends, with their apprehensions, who all agreed to repair with them to Laurieta's house, which they ac-

cordingly did, and again and again interrogated her concerning him; but they found her constant in her first answer. But the finger of providence seemed pointed to lead to the detection of her guilt, which she discovered by a perturbation in her looks, and some inconsistency in her speech; and calling to mind her former ill treatment of him, on account of Poligny, and the duel between Belvile and him, they could not help suspecting that she knew something of what was become of him, and acquainting the criminal judges with their suspicions, they severally examined both Laurieta and her maid Lucilla, with Belvile's two servants, whereupon they concluded to imprison Laurieta. She was strangely surprised and terrified at this, but had resolution enough to deny all, and stand firmly on the justification of her pretended innocence.

Being then adjudged to the torture, with a masculine, or rather hellish fortitude, she endured it without betraying the least shadow either of fear or guilt. However they wisely detained her still in prison, in hopes that some other circumstances might appear to discover the murder: and eight days being past, without his being heard of, they made no doubt of his being in another world.

During the time of Laurieta's confinement, her bloody maid had constant admittance to her in the prison, where they interchangeably swore secrecy to each other, since on either's discovery depended both their lives.

While the news of this murder was spread all over Provence, Dauphiny, and Languedoc, and nothing could be learned of Belvile, Palisere, who was

adorned with as many virtues as Laurieta was stained with vices; went out of compassion and christian charity, to make her a visit in the prison; where Laurieta, to induce Palafiere to give the greater credit to what she alledged of her own innocence, told her, she knew no more of Belvile's death than she, Palafiere herself, did of Poligny's; which words being overheard by some present, were immediately carried to the criminal judges, who instantly caused Palafiere to be apprehended, and brought before them; when having examined her upon Poligny's death, which no way affrightened her, because she knew her conscience clear and her innocence untainted, they then enquired into what had passed between herself, Poligny, Laurieta, and Belvile, of all which she gave them a true and faithful account, and, to confirm what she said, gave them the keys of a trunk at home, wherein she told them was the copy of a letter she had sent to Poligny, and his answer, which she prayed them to send for, in order to clear her of all suspicion.

The judges did so, and finding the letter and answer to concur with the circumstances which she had related to them, discharged her.

The Judges thinking there were farther grounds to suspect Laurieta, upon the reading Poligny's letter, ordered her to be more closely confined than ever; but she, knowing that Palafiere neither had, nor could any ways accuse her of either of the murders, put a good face upon her bad heart, playing many frolicks in prison, and shewing all the signs of confidence in her own innocence, which she would endeavour to persuade

the world she still enjoyed. But to check these vain triumphs, word was brought that her maid Lucilla had secretly fled, which the judges hearing, caused them more strongly than ever to suspect that Laurieta was the principal, and Lucilla the accessory in the death of Belvile; so they sent all ways, and used every means to apprehend the latter.

But behold the miraculous and just judgment of the Lord upon this wretched and bloody Lucilla! who flying in the night through fear, from Avignon towards Orange, where her parents dwelt, she was drowned in the way, and the next morning found dead, and taken out of one of the fenny lakes between the two cities.

This news being brought to Laurieta, she again converted her fear into hope, knowing well that dead bodies could tell no tales. But the judges, from this appearance of Laurieta's guilt, in the flight of her maid, ordered her again to be put to the torture, which, the devil being yet strong in her, she endured with most admirable patience and courage, stoutly denying her crime, and peremptorily maintaining and justifying her innocence; insomuch that her judges, considering the sharpness of the torture, and that they had no direct proof against her, began to think that it might perhaps be the maid only, and not the mistress, who was the murderer; and resolved the week following, if nothing more appeared against her, to release her, which Laurieta understanding, the torments her limbs and body had endured, seemed all healed by the enjoyment she conceived at the thought of her enlargement.

She.

She now, both in her dress and behaviour, shewed all the marks of assurance that could be expected from the most innocent, nay, such was her vanity, that she appeared more like a bride, preparing for her nuptials, than a foul murderer in the confinement of a prison.

But, alas! these triumphs were short, and how sufficient soever she believed herself to blind the eyes of the world, yet, did the Lord, in his own time, both detect and punish her whoredom and murder; and it was in the following manner that her guilt was discovered:

Her extravagant way of living, and the expence of her trial and imprisonment, had not only prevented her being able to pay her landlord, Monsieur Richcourt, a whole year's rent that was due to him, but likewise three hundred livres in money, which she had borrowed of him, and he, being now impatient of delays, and believing her disgrace would prove her ruin, and render her incapable of ever paying him, let his house to the Dean of Carpentras, who, for his health sake, was come to winter at Avignon; he likewise sold all her household goods to satisfy his debt, except the billets in the cellar, and those he kept for himself; which when his servants came to remove, they found the earth had been newly disturbed, and opened the length and breadth of a grave, whereat they were much surprized, and acquainted their master with it, who coming to view the place, it pleased God that it instantly struck into his thoughts, that Laurieta had murdered Belvile, and buried him there; so not permitting his servants to remove any part of the earth, he, like a discreet and ho-

nest citizen, went away immediately to the criminal judges, and informed them of the matter; and they concurring with Richcourt in his opinion, went themselves to the house and cellar, where causing the new opened earth to be removed, they found the dead body of Belvile buried in his cloaths, which they cause to be taken off, and the body searched, wherein they found a pistol shot quite through the reins, and six or seven other wounds made by a sword, or rapier. They were amazed at the horrid spectacle, assuring themselves, that it could be no other than Laurieta, and her maid Lucilla, who had committed this cruel murder.

They ordered the dead body to be secretly conveyed to the prison, and there, when Laurieta least dreamed of it, they exposed it to her sight, and in rough terms charged her with the murder; but this she devil, with an obdurate heart and face of brass, seemed not at all daunted at the sight, but with many terrible imprecations and asseverations, stood firmly on the defence of her innocence.

Her judges no longer enduring to be deluded with her vows, would not give ear to her impious oaths, but ordered her paps to be torn off with red hot pincers, as a punishment for her obstinate denial of the fact, which they were perfectly satisfied she was justly charged with.

Lurieta, greatly astonished at this sentence, and seeing the instruments of this cruel torment making ready, fell down upon her knees, and with a shower of tears from her eyes, and lifting them up, with her hands, to heaven, confessed that she and her maid Lucilla, were the murderers of Belvile; for the guilt of which,

which, she said, she could expect no pardon in this world, but hoped God, on her sincere repentance, would have mercy on her soul in the next.

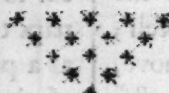
The judges then remitted the sentence of tearing off her paps, but condemned her to be first hanged and then burnt, the next day in the afternoon, before monsieur Richcourt's house: and that the body of Lucilla, who was likewise an actor in this bloody tragedy, should be taken out of the grave, and burnt in the same fire; which was accordingly executed, in the presence of an infinite number of people, both of the city of Avignon, and places adjacent.

Laurieta, upon the ladder, uttered a
loud cry, conveying to the public and
the jury, when Laurieta had dreamed of it,
that she was exposed to her fight, and in truth
she was charged not with the murder, but
with the theft, with an obscene poem and
other offences, which were not at all deemed
at the time, but with many terrible im-
putations and allegations, good hands
on the defence of her innocence.

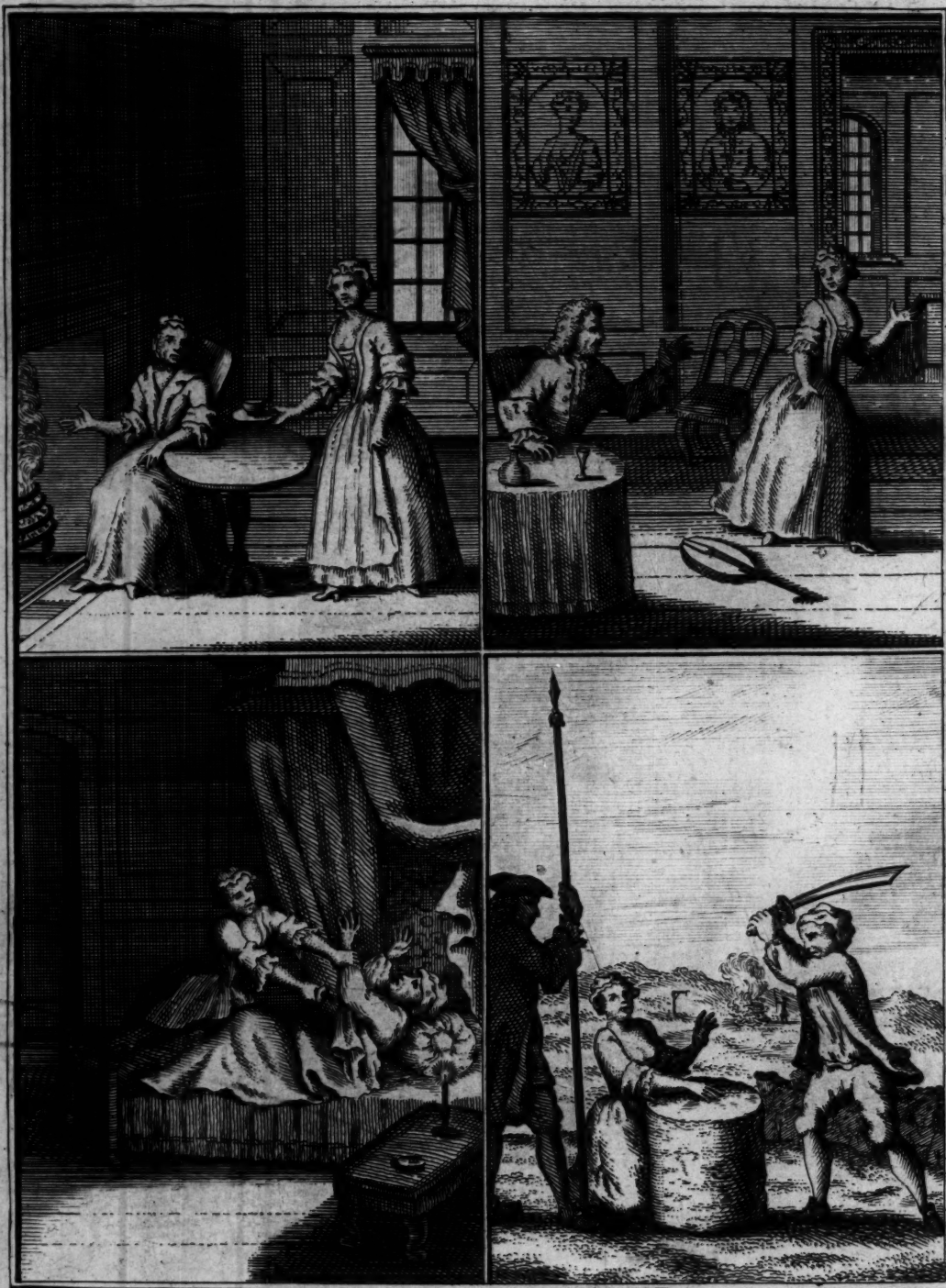
Her judges no longer wishing to be
deceived with her words, will now give
her to her lawyers, who will defend her
to the point of death and her prison,
a punishment for her offence, which
of the fact, which they were guilty
of, and the law will decide with

most penitent speech to the people, tending first to dissuade them by her example from the foul and crying sins of whoredom, revenge, and murder; and then to request them to assist her with their devout prayers, in her last petition to heaven, for mercy on her soul.

By this tragical history, Christian reader, let us observe what are the bitter consequences of lust and revenge, and the inseparable companions that constantly attend them: the consideration of which not only adds consolation to the righteous, but strikes a terror to the ungodly. O let us lead such lives as that, by avoiding the crimes, we may not fear the punishment of these unfortunare sinners.







G O D ' S R E V E N G E

MURDER and ADULTERY.

H I S T O R Y I X.

A R G U M E N T.

Jacamo de Castelnovo lustfully falls in love with his Daughter-in-Law Perina, his own Son Francisco de Castelnovo's Wife; to enjoy whom, he causes Jerantha first to poison his own Wife Fidelia, and then his Son Francisco; in Revenge of which, Perina murders him in his Bed. Jerantha, like to die in Child-bed, confesseth both the Murders, for which she is hanged and burnt. Perina has her Right Hand cut off, and is condemned to perpetual Imprisonment, in which she dies sorrowfully.

IN the city of St. John de Mauriene, in the dukedom of Savoy, there dwelt an ancient gentleman of great wealth and quality, named Signor Antonio Arconeto, who had, by his lady deceased, two children, viz. Alexandro and Perina, the first about eighteen years of age, and the other fifteen; but there was a much greater difference between them in their make and complexion, than in their age, for Alexandro, the son, was, by nature, perverse and choleric;

Perina, the daughter, mild, courteous, and placid; Alexandro, like his father, was short, crook-backed, and hard favoured; Perina, resembling her mother, tall, straight, and fair. Now as it is a common observation, that parents do usually most affect those children who most resemble themselves, thus the mother had preferred Perina in her affection to her brother Alexandro, so the father had always preferred Alexandro to his sister.

Perina's mother being now dead, her

A a

father

father took very little notice of her. Alexandro, as he grew up in years, grew still more haughty and ill-humoured, so that his behaviour towards his sister, was more like a master than a brother; yet such was her good sense and sweet temper, that she bore all with patience, well knowing it would be to little purpose to complain to her father, who was as great a tyrant as the other; but an accident now happened, which it might be expected would have released her from part of her grievance; for her brother Alexandro being at a banquet at Susa, where he eat and drank with his usual intemperance, when he returned home was seized with a violent fever, which, notwithstanding his father's care, and all the assistance that could be got from the most able physicians, carried him off in three days.

Old Arconeto having buried his son Alexandro, it was reasonable to suppose, that he should love his only child Perina better than before, but it was quite otherwise; for, although his words were commands to her, and his pleasure her law, yet did he both condemn her obedience and her; never looking on her but with hatred, being never better pleased than when she was out of his sight; which unnatural disrespect and unjust cruelty of her father towards her, did so nip the joys of her youth, and the blossoms of her health and beauty, that she became infinitely melancholy, and extreme sick and weak, which was observed and pitied by all her relations and friends, she being now the only heir to all her father's lands and riches: but nobody was more concerned for her than the lady Dominica, her aunt, being her mother's sister, a wi-

dow lady, who lived in the same city; therefore she prevailed with her brother-in-law Arconeto, to let her come and be with her, which was a great satisfaction to them both; to Perina, in being released from the barbarous usage of her father, and to her aunt, in having so agreeable a companion.

The lady Dominica had formerly contracted a daughter of her's, named Bertha, to Signor Bartholomeo Spelaffi, a cavalier of the city of Nice, of noble descent and large revenues: and now the appointed time was come for their marriage, to which end Signor Spelaffi was come from Nice, to St. John de Mauriene, accompanied with many young gentlemen, his kinsmen and friends; and, in a word, with a train suiting his rank and quality.

The lady Dominica appointed her niece Perina, to conduct the bridegroom to church, and he allotted one of the noblest cavaliers that came with him, named Signor Francisco de Castelnovo, to perform the same ceremony to his bride Signora Bertha. This cavalier, a knight of Malta, was a native of the city of Nice, and son and heir to Signor Jacomo de Castelnovo, a very antient and rich Baron of Savoy. He had no sooner fixed his eyes on Perina, but he was struck with the charms of her person, and, being himself every way well made, and agreeable in his carriage, was no less admired by her. The cavalier was impatient till he could converse with her alone, and she longed as much to give him an opportunity; so, after dinner, dancing in company with several others in the garden, at the end of one of the dances, he singled her out, and leading her

her into a bower, covered with jessamin and roses, he there, betwixt sighs and half words, endeavoured to reveal his passion to her. Perina, who was ravished with all he said, could not help betraying her sentiments by her blushes; and tho' she did all that was in her power to conceal her love, yet he was not so ignorant, but he could see that his addresses were not displeasing to her. And, therefore, during the space of fifteen days, that he and Spelassi remained at St. John de Mauriene, he found occasions every day to continue his courtship to her, till at last he got her consent to be his wife. She had two strong inducements to this marriage; First, the person and quality of her lover, with whom she should live in the city of Nice; and Secondly, that she should be no longer under the tyranny of her father at St. John de Mauriene.

This young couple could not carry on their intrigues so privately, but that it was taken notice of by several, especially by the lady Dominica, her aunt, and indeed Signor Francisco de Castelnovo himself came afterwards to acquaint her with it, and beg her assistance in his suit, which she, knowing his birth and fortune, was very far from being averse to; so the old lady having broke the way, he went himself to make his proposals to Signor Arconeto, and he being willing to part with her to any husband, that he might not be troubled with her any more, and thinking a far worse match might have served her, very readily consented to this; which not only banished Perina's old griefs, but confirmed Castelnovo's new joys, who riding away post to Nice, acquainted his own father, Signor Giacomo de Castelnovo therewith, and swiftly re-

turning to St. John de Mauriene with his consent and approbation, the marriage between Castelnovo and Perina was immediately solemnized, but not with so much pomp as that of Spelassia and Bertha, on account of the perverse temper of old Arconeto. Now fifteen days more being expired in feasts and pastimes, Spelassia and Castelnovo returned home to enrich Nice, with those beautiful spoils, Bertha and Perina, of which they had robbed St. John de Mauriene.

Castelnovo, having brought this fair and lovely Perina home to Nice, she was very courteously received, and honourably entertained by his own father Signor Giacomo de Castelnovo, and by the lady Fidelia his mother, as were all her kinsfolks and friends who accompanied her; nor, in short, was there any thing wanting to testify how much they were pleased at the choice their son had made of a bride: as to the young people, they were so extremely happy, that they thought they now enjoyed heaven upon earth, and that no joys in heaven could exceed the transports they found in the felicity of each other. But alas! how short were all those joys, and what tragical storms were brewing in the clouds to overcast the happiness and serenity of this marriage: for it is with grief and reluctance that I am forced to relate, that the old Baron Giacomo de Castelnovo, of threescore and eight years of age, had so far forgotten grace and nature, that gazing on the fresh and lovely beauty of the sweet lady Perina, his own son's wife, he gave a loose to his inordinate affections, and lust after her. Oh! how my heart aches to think that he, who was white with the snow of venerable age, and had, as it were, one foot in the grave, should thus lustfully desire to defile his own son's

son's bed! And that he, whose veins were dried up and withered, and had nothing living in him but desire, should, of all the beauties in the world, covet his only son's wife; and that he, who had scarce any time left to repent of his old sins, should now anew make himself guilty, both of adultery and incest. Most horrible depravity of human nature.

Miserable Castelnovo, wretched old man! or rather lascivious *Beast*! thus to drown his thoughts in the hell of concupiscence, when it would much better become him to lift them up to heaven, in the sacrifice of prayer and contemplation. Now the better to draw her to his lustful desires, he was wonderful courteous and affable to her, often walking and talking with her, and many times kissing her, with which, both her husband and herself were highly pleased; especially Perina, who found a great alteration in her fortune, in that her father-in-law Castelnovo proved as courteous to her, as her own father Arconeto was cruel; but poor innocent lady, little did she think or dream of his lascivious intent against her honour and chastity: old Castelnovo wallowing in the filthiness, and burning in the fire of his new lust, thought on nothing but how to obtain his beastly will; but not daring to acquaint her with his horrid purpose, whilst his son was at home with her, he forged a contrivance both unnatural and treacherous, to make him follow the wars, in waiting on Duke Charles Emanuel, or the Prince Victor Amadeus, his son and heir, who, with their warlike troops were resolved to expel the Duke of Feria, Viceroy of Milan, with the Spanish regiments out of Vercelli, Casal, and other towns of Piedmont; to which end,

his lustful affection to Perina, made him eloquent in persuading, and powerful in drawing her husband into this martial enterprize, so full of honour and glory; adding, that the duty he owed to his prince and country, called him into the field; and that he ought not to give himself and his honour up wholly to his young wife, and the pleasures of marriage.

Young Castelnovo, not at all suspecting what a snake lay hid under his father's fair speeches, like a noble and generous knight, needed no other advocate, but his own honour and martial disposition to embark in the wars; and although the beauty, tears, and prayers, of his young lady were vehement solicitors to divert him from it, yet, he was resolute to leave her for three or four months; and so making ready his horses, arms, and other accoutrements, he took his leave, giving her a thousand kisses, which she repaid with as many sighs and tears, and then departing from Nice, he found out the Duke with his army in Piedmont, where for a little while we will take leave of him.

It is hard to determine whether the departure of young Castelnovo, gave more sorrow to his wife, or more joy to his father, the first was all in tears, the other all mirth and jollity, and being now grown so vain of himself, he trimmed up his beard, and dressed himself in the most youthful apparel; and though he did yet restrain his tongue from acquainting his fair daughter-in-law with his lustful pretensions, yet was he never easy out of her company, nor when in it, could he refrain from frequently kissing her: but she was so pure in her thoughts, and so innocent herself, that she never once suspected his meaning;

meaning; but his wife, the lady Fidelia, could not help observing his immodest and unwise familiarities; it was great grief to her to see her old husband, in the winter of his age, so sottish and beastly in his lust, after his own son's wife, to see that no respect of heaven, nor conscience, nor the apprehensions of future damnation, could have grace or power enough to kill these lascivious thoughts in their conception, or strangle them in their birth; to see that he, who was ready to go to the bed of death, should now be burning with desire, to go to that of adultery and incest; but however, as age had taught her to love discreetly, and to avoid the sudden transports of jealousy, she bore this as patiently as she could, till finding a convenient opportunity, with tears in her eyes, she very secretly checked him for his inordinate desires towards Perina her daughter-in-law. But it is the nature of sin so to betray our judgments, that we flatter ourselves with the false conceit, that no one can perceive it in us; and so had this old Castelnovo deceived himself, and thought that he had been all along dancing in a net, unheeded by the eyes of jealousy or suspicion; but when he found himself discovered, he was so far from being reclaimed by the prudent counsel, and virtuous admonition of his wife, that he vowed revenge against her; and thinking likewise that she stood in the way of his lust, he resolved to remove her suddenly out of the world, her, who for the space of forty-two years, had been his loyal and loving wife; but withal, he determined to act so privately, that as not having yet discovered his affection to his daughter Perina, he would likewise conceal the murder of his wife from her and

all the world, if possible, but the execrable agents, whom he meant to employ in the bloody business.

To this end, having revolved in his mind many different means of accomplishing his design, he determined at length to poison her; and thought none so proper to undertake the work, as her waiting woman Jerantha, who was brought into it, on account of some former lascivious dalliances between them, and the present reward of five hundred ducats; she accordingly, a few mornings after, put some deadly poison into a white broth, which she was wont to make, and give her lady, and which, spreading itself through her veins, in eight days time, carried this aged and virtuous matron to her grave; but her murderers paid dearly for this her untimely end.

Perina, and all the lady Fidelia's kinsfolks and friends infinitely lamented and bewailed her death, and indeed so did the whole city of Nice, where she was highly esteemed by all degrees of people; and yet were all their tears nothing in comparison of those of her villainous husband, Castelnovo, who, although he inwardly rejoiced, yet, to outward appearance, was grieved and afflicted beyond all measure; but it was no wonder that he, who had so lately acted the part of a murderer, should now be able to perform that of an hypocrite.

While this mournful tragedy was acting at Nicé, the mediation of the French King and the Pope having reconciled the differences between Spain and Savoy, put an end to the war.

The Duke of Fria being returned to Milan, and the Duke of Savoy, and his sons to Turin, consequently home came

B b our

our knight Castelnovo, to Nice, where, thinking to rejoice with his young wife, he was so unfortunate, as to mourn for the death of his old mother; but God knows, neither of them the least suspected her cruel and untimely murder, much less the cause of it. The lascivious and bloody father, although, to cast a mist before men's eyes, he publicly mourned at his wife's death, and now rejoiced at his son's return; yet in private, he, in his heart, was as much grieved at the latter, as he rejoiced at the first. Perina, we may very well suppose, was highly pleased at the return of her husband, in whose presence she enjoyed all she could wish or desire, and whose absence she accounted her greatest affliction: she now flattered herself with hopes of his continuance with her, but the lewd old father-in-law, foreseeing it would be impossible to obtain her at home, unless her husband, his son, was again employed abroad, he bent all his thoughts to find an occasion that might serve for that purpose; and these suggestions two to him, either to send him into France, with the Prince Major, who was lately contracted, and was shortly to be espoused to madam Christiene, the King's second sister; or else to the Isle of Malta, where some certain pensions and offices were then to be disposed of, and where he had formerly received the honour of knighthood: he laid both those journies before his son, but told him, he approved best of the latter.

The son, on his part, would have chose the journey to France; but making his own inclinations give way to those of his father, agreed on the journey to Malta, all things being prepared, and ready for his departure, Perina impor-

tunately begged him to make a speedy return, and so conducting him over the hill to Villa Franca, in her coach, they there, with many reciprocal kisses, sighs and tears, took leave of each other: he embarking in a French galley, bound from Marseilles to Malta, which stopped there accidentally; and she, with many prayers for his safety, committing him to the auspicious winds and seas, very sorrowfully returned to Nice.

Thus leaving the son to the mercy of the uncertain elements, let us again return to his unnatural and brutish father, who, seeing his wife gone to heaven, his son to Malta, and all things succeeding to his lascivious desires, did now assure himself, that either by fair or foul means, he would reap the pleasure of his beautiful daughter-in-law's bed: to this end, he gave her the sole government and superintendence of his house: and scarce were fifteen days past, when finding her in her chamber playing on her lute, he, after some pauses, coughs, and kisses, belched forth the eruptions of his beastly passion. A repetition of this old lecher's speeches would but pollute my own pen, and offend the chaste reader's ear: let it suffice then to say, that the beastliness and unexpectedness thereof, first made Perina's colour rise, both with shame and anger, and then immediately again made her look pale with grief and disdain; and not able to brook his lewd discourse, much less his hateful presence, she, in defence of her chastity, which she preferred even to her life, giving him a sharp answer, threw away her lute, and went hastily out of the chamber, at which old Castelnovo bit his lips with rage, and hung his head with shame and indignation;

tion; but sin and the devil strongly reigning in him, he was resolved not to be put off with the first repulse, but in every garden, walk and room, haunted her as a ghost, thinking, by continual importunity, to bring her to listen to those things, which were at first so shocking to her: but this had the quite contrary effect, for she was grieved at the first motion, so was she doubly afflicted at this perseverance in his folly.

How to behave herself at such a crisis, was very difficult to know; for alas! her own father Arconeto, and her aunt Dominica, were both at St. John de Mauriene, her dear husband was in Malta, and her kind mother-in-law, the lady Fidelia, in heaven, so that she had no friend to reveal her sorrow to: once she had thoughts to steal away from Nice, and so passing the mountains, fly back to St. John de Mauriene; but then considering the dishonour, and withal the danger of undertaking such a journey, as also the cold reception she was likely to find there, from her own hard-hearted father, who would rather deride, than pity her misfortunes: so altering her intention, resolved to stay a little longer in Nice, hoping and praying that God would rectify this disorderly passion of her father-in-law, and reform the errors of his lascivious thoughts and desires. A thousand times she wished herself in Malta, with the knight her husband, or he in Nice with her; but since she could not be with him, or he with her, in a wish, it was some comfort to her, to think that a letter might hasten his return; whereupon resolving, though the occasion be strange and shameful, yet, she secretly stealing to her chamber,

and there, with tears in her ink, wrote to him as follows:

PERINA to CASTELNOVO.

“ Although my eyes and heart can
“ better weep for my afflictions,
“ than my pen delineate them, yet should
“ I infinitely wrong you and myself, if I
“ informed you not, by this letter, the
“ secret ambassador of my heart, that my
“ affection deserves, and my honour re-
“ quires your speedy return: I would
“ unlock this mystery to you, and be more
“ intelligible, but that my own modesty,
“ and another’s shame, command my
“ pen to silence: my sighs and tears so
“ interrupt my pen, that though I have
“ the will, yet want I the power to ex-
“ plain myself to you. Only my dear
“ Francisco, if ever your Perina was
“ dear to you, make her happy in your
“ return; for, till you are in Nice, hea-
“ ven only, but nothing on earth can
“ give joy to

“ PERINA.”

Having written this letter, she went to a confident and intimate friend of her husband’s, a gentleman named Signor Benedetto Sabia, whom she engaged to undertake the safe conveyance, and secret delivery thereof to Castelnovo in Malta. Castelnovo, at the receipt of this letter, was much perplexed, and though he read it over and over again, found it so obscure, that he could not gather the meaning of it; but, at last, concluded it to be only a wile of her’s to bring him home: and he being loath to abandon the hopes of preferment in that island, which

which now the Grand Master had promised him, soon dispatched Sabia back to Nice; and plucking off a rich emerald from his finger, delivered it to him for his lady Perina, as a token of his fervent affection, and with it gave him a letter, in answer to her's.

In the interim of Sabia's absence at Malta, our old lascivious Baron Castelnovo was not idle in Nice, but still sought to draw Perina to his adulterous will; nay, was become so obscene in his words, that they not only exceeded the bounds of chastity, but of decency; the poor lady could find no truce, nor obtain any intermission from his villainous sollicitations; however she was still resolved to preserve her honour with her life, but thought every hour a year, till her husband returned: at last came back her faithful messenger Sabia, who, instead of Castelnovo himself, brought her his ring, and the following letter:

CASTELNOVO to PERINA.

"MY fair and dearest Perina, the
 " knowledge of your sighs and
 " tears afflict me the more, in that I am
 " ignorant from whence they proceed:
 " it is true, nothing that can afflict you,
 " but must be grievous to me; and as to
 " the preservation of your honour, it is
 " dearer to me than my own; but I am
 " very well satisfied, that you will main-
 " tain it to the grave; so that if any one,
 " since my departure, has fallen in love
 " with your beauty, you must not think
 " it strange, much less grieve at it, since
 " the excellency thereof hath power, not
 " only to captivate one, but many; nay,
 " the consideration thereof, should rather

" rejoice than afflict you, since whoever
 " he is, the shame in the end, will prove
 " his, and the glory your's: but, my
 " dearest angel, I think your honour is
 " only the pretence, and your affliction
 " the cause of writing as you do, so ear-
 " nestly do you desire my return: where-
 " unto I would willingly consent, but
 " that the daily expectation of my pre-
 " ferment, must a little longer detain me
 " here; but let me entreat you to be as-
 " sured of this resolution, that I will dis-
 " patch my affairs here, with all expe-
 " dition, and then return to Nice, where,
 " in my Perina, is all that can give plea-
 " sure and satisfaction to

" CASTELNOVO."

Having read over this letter, the better to dissemble her secret passions and sorrows, she very courteously conversed with Sabia, for a while, and then very thankfully took leave of him; in the distraction of her mind she was in, she first threw herself on her bed, then on the floor, and being deceived in the hopes of her husband's return, knew not what to say or do; for she saw that her father-in-law's obstinacy grew worse and worse, who, seeing that his fair speeches and entreaties could not prevail with her, changed his smiles to frowns, and his supplications to threats; and those sometimes so rough, that she thought she had now reason to fear his revenge, as well as his lust, therefore, to preserve her honour, and to provide for the safety of her life, she resolved once again to prove the kindness of her own unkind father Arconeto, and so determined to leave Nice, and fly to St. John de Mauriene. And to assist and accompany her in her
 secret

secret flight, thought none so proper as Sabia, who for the respect he had, both for her husband and herself, very willingly consented to it; so she preparing her necessary apparel, and he a proper equipage for them both, they very secretly, and with great expedition, passed the mountains in a very dark night, and recovered St. John de Mauriene; where, though she was not truly welcome to her own father Arconeto, yet her honour and her life were there secured from the lust and revenge of her father-in-law Castelnovo; nevertheless the cause of her escape, and the being at such a distance from her husband, did so afflict her, that she again grew pale and sickly; and in the great anxiety of her mind, she took once more the resolution of sending Sabia back to Malta to her husband, with a second letter, in hopes that might have more power to prevail upon him to return than her first had, so calling for pen and paper wrote as follows:

PERINA to CASTELNOVO.

"SINCE you would not leave Malta to see Nice for my sake, I have left Nice to live, or rather to die in St. John de Mauriene for your's; it is true, my love and affection to you, made me desirous of your return; but it is as true, that I should not have been so pressing as I was the last time I wrote, had there not been another cause; and had not one, to whom nature hath given a singular interest in you, and you in him, sought to spoil me of mine honour. You are confident of my affection to you, if your's had been so fervent to myself,

"neither sea nor land could have kept us asunder. If any preferment be dearer to you in Malta, than my life, then stay where you are; but if my life be dearer than that, then return to St. John de Mauriene. Had you not purposely mistaken what was the cause, but for a pretext, in my strong importunity for your return, I could more easily have digested your denial; but since neither my affection nor honour hath had power enough to prevail upon you, let me beg it for the sake of my life, since I cannot enjoy that, if you are much longer absent from me; make haste therefore to see your Perina, if ever you desire to see her again. And let her bear this one satisfaction to the grave, that she may disclose a secret to you, which she will conceal from all the world besides.

"PERINA."

Whilst Sabia was again speeding towards Malta, with Perina's second letter to her husband, we will speak a little of old Castelnovo the father, who seeing his daughter-in-law fled, and consequently his hopes with her, he now began to be in great trouble and confusion; his thoughts doubly tormenting him; First, in being frustrated in his designs; Secondly, with the apprehension of her betraying his lascivious suit to her, which must on all sides procure him nothing but shame and disgrace: it was now he first saw his error and vanity, in attempting to make shipwreck of that honour and chastity, of which he ought rather to have been the guardian; his crime was of that nature, that it was odious both to

God and man; opposite to grace, and repugnant to nature. He knew he must be loathed by all, but chiefly he dreaded Perina and her husband Castelnovo, who, he was assured, would be all on fire when he should hear of his guilt, and whom he knew not how to look in the face, when he should arrive from Malta; which his guilty conscience, without doubt, informed him would be shortly; nor was he out in his conjecture, for by this time Sabia had delivered to Castelnovo his wife's second letter, the perusal of which so disturbed his mind, that he was almost beside himself; nor could he imagine who in Nice, even in his father's house, could be so impudently lascivious as to attempt to blemish his honour in that of his wife's: so making her griefs his own, he resolved to make no delay in being with her, but first dispatched Sabia with a letter to his wife, as the harbinger of his coming, which was to this purport:

CASTELNOVO to PERINA.

"YOUR sudden departure from
 " Nice to St. John de Mauriene,
 " doth equally afflict and amaze me; I
 " burn with desire to know who is the
 " author and cause thereof, that I may
 " likewise know how to right you in re-
 " venging myself. I thought fit to re-
 " turn Signor Sabia to you immediately,
 " but will embark myself within two
 " days; so that if the wind prove fa-
 " vourable, I may be with you almost as
 " soon as this letter. I come, my fair
 " Perina, and if heaven prove propitious
 " to my most religious prayers, and de-
 " fires here on earth, our meeting shall

" shortly be as sweet and happy; as our
 " last parting was bitter and sorrowful.

" CASTELNOVO."

According to his letter he embarked two days after for Genoa, from thence he went to Nice, and posting over the mountains, soon arrived at St. John de Mauriene, where, at his father-in-law Arconeto's house, he found his dear Perina, who was every minute impatiently expecting his arrival, having received his letter the evening before.

After several sweet and tender expressions of love and fondness, Castelnovo could not be more hasty to enquire, than Perina was to relate to him the cause of her sudden departure from Nice, occasioned by the unnatural lust, and monstrous behaviour of his father; which, with many sighs and tears, she painted to him in their own black colours. He was much amazed at this strange account, and doubly grieved to find, that the person who would have injured him in that tender point, was his own father, and grieved too for his sake, to think, that neither grace nor nature could banish such lascivious thoughts from the heart of one, who, at his years, ought to have had his thoughts only on heaven and heavenly things.

Young Castelnovo having highly applauded his wife's chastity, and discreet carriage in making her escape, resolved to continue in St. John de Mauriene with her father, and not return to Nice to his own. This resolution was almost as soon broken as made, for, by this time, old Castelnovo had heard of his son's return from Malta, to St. John de Mauriene, and doubted not but Perina had told

told him all that had passed in his attempt upon her honour; but grieving at the remembrance of his folly, and dreading the shame that would attend the publication of it, he resolved to confess his crime, and by the mediation of the following persuasive letter, endeavoured to bring them back to Nice.

CASTELNOVO to his Son CASTELNOVO.

" I AM as glad of your arrival from
" Malta, as sorrowful for your ab-
" fence from Nice, and since to deny is
" to redouble our errors, I will go no
" farther than myself to find the cause
" thereof, since I know my lascivious
" and graceless attempt against the ho-
" nour of your chaste wife, hath drawn
" you to this resolution; but now I write
" it to my present comfort, that grace
" and religion have vanquished my in-
" ordinate lust, and I am not only sor-
" rowful, but sincerely penitent, for that
" crime, which I can no longer remem-
" ber but with horror and detestation.
" My soul, I hope, hath made its peace
" with God, and my heart desires to do
" the same with yourself, and virtuous
" wife; and as I hope he will forgive,
" so, I beseech you both to forget my
" folly. I am as ready to make this ac-
" knowledgment with my tongue, as
" with my pen; wherefore, as you are
" the sole prop of my age, and comfort
" of my life, make me not miserable
" by your absence, but bring back your
" virtuous wife with you; for here I pro-
" fess, before heaven and earth, that I
" will henceforth honour her for that
" chastity which I heretofore lasciviously
" sought to betray and violate.

" CASTELNOVO."

This penitent letter of the father having prevailed with the son and his chaste wife, to hush up all that had happened in secrecy, within eight days they both returned from St. John, de Mauriene to Nice, where they were courteously welcomed, and respectfully received by their father, whose contrition was outwardly so great for his former folly, as that even tears flowed from his eyes at the remembrance thereof: and making good the promise in his letter, he very patiently and sorrowfully begged their forgiveness, which they granted with as much alacrity as willingness.

Thus, to all outward appearance, was this horrid piece of business made up, as if nothing had happened; but alas! we shall very shortly see to the contrary, for old Castelnovo, notwithstanding all those religious promises and feigned tokens of repentance, was very far from being the man he seemed to be, and none of the religion on his tongue was in his heart; nay, he was so far from being reformed, that the sight of his daughter-in-law, Perina, did but renew the flames of his lust.

Castelnovo, thinking it impossible to accomplish his hellish designs, as long as his son was alive, resolved with himself to make away with him by poison, as he had his virtuous mother before him; and for this purpose he again had recourse to his vile agent Jerantha, to whom he offered five hundred ducats more to perpetrate this second murder; but she being so sorrowful for the death of the mother, that at first she refused to have any hand in that of the son; had this penitent resolution continued, she had lived more fortunately, and not died so miserably as she

she did. But old Castelnovo finding his gold could not now prevail a second time with Jerantha, and being equally inflamed with lust to Perina, and malice and revenge to his son Castelnovo her husband, and having resolved at any rate to gain his point, he therefore promised marriage to Jerantha, if she would but do the work; so notwithstanding his first battery failed, yet he entirely got the better of her by this, for the devil had made her so ambitious of honour and grandeur, that the thoughts of becoming a great lady from a simple waiting woman, got so much the better of conscience and humanity, that then readily she undertook to perform his request; and, oh grief to say it! in less than a week's time accomplished this unnatural father's horrid design on his son.

On the sudden death of her husband, Perina was ready to die with grief, aye, to drown herself in an ocean of her own tears, tearing her hair, beating her breasts, taking no sustenance, nor admitting any comfort, so that she seemed resolute not long to survive him; but she could not give more real demonstrations of her sorrow for the loss of her husband, then old Castelnovo pretended to shew for the loss of his son: but, considering what had passed before, his now so overacting the part, made our young afflicted widow vehemently suspect, that he had himself a hand in his son's death, and that Jerantha was likewise accessory to it, by observing how much she carried herself aloft, and how familiar she was grown on a sudden with her lord and master; and indeed, as her sorrows increased her suspicion, so did that make her take a violent resolution of revenge against them

both, if she could be once assured that her suspicions were just. To make proof of this, she reasoned with herself in this manner; that if her father-in-law was the murderer of his son, his malice to him must proceed from his beastly lust to her, and that having got rid of that obstacle, he would shortly renew his suit to her, which if he did, she vowed to take such a revenge as should be satisfied with nothing less than his death.

But a short time had elapsed when it plainly appeared that her suspicion was not ill founded, for, within one month after her husband was laid in his untimely grave, the old lascivious father again assaulted her with his unnatural passion; she put him off somewhat coyly and disdainfully, but not with so much fierceness and anger as before, on purpose to make him the more eager in his pursuit, and thereby the better to draw him to her lure. After many requests and solicitations she seemed to yield to his desire; but indeed with a bloody intent to dispatch him out of the world.

The affair, being, as he thought, concluded between them, they seemed only to differ now in the manner, and some circumstances of putting the finishing stroke to it; the father was desirous of going to the daughter-in-law's bed, but the daughter insisted upon going to the father-in-law's; however, both concluded that night was the proper season to execute their intended wickedness; his reason was to avoid the rage and jealousy of Jerantha, whom he had again played the fool with, but now refused to marry, although she was very near the time of her travail: and Perina's that she might not pollute her own bed, but his, with his blood.

blood. They soon after, not only agreed upon the night, but the hour, which being come, and Castelnovo, in bed, impatiently expecting the harvest of those joys he had so long desired, and she softly entering the chamber, having a poinard hid in her sleeve, then bolting the door that no one might prevent her from her bloody design, approached the bed, and he lifting himself up purposely to welcome and kiss her, his breast being at that time naked, like an incensed fury, drawing out her poinard, uttered these words, "Thou wretched whoremaster, and murderer of thy own son, take this:" and so stabbed him to the heart, and leaving him reeking in his own hot blood, he had time only to fetch one groan or two, as his soul was departing from his body; which being overheard by the servants of the house, who running towards the chamber, there found our inhuman Perina issuing forth, all besmeared with blood, and with the bloody poinard in her hand: being all amazed at this horrid spectacle, they seized on her immediately; then going into the chamber, and finding their master dead, the report of the murder was presently carried to the criminal judges, who caused Perina that night to be imprisoned for the fact, which she was resolved no way to deny, but rather gloried in what she had done.

Jerantha greatly fearing the two other murders would come to light, as great as her pregnancy was, thought it high time to provide for her own safety, by stealing away to a friend's house in the city, which now in all parts rung with this cruel and unnatural murder; an account of which was also carried over the Alps, and

made known in St. John de Mauriene, where, although Perina's father Arconeto, could never heretofore affect her, yet he was now exceedingly grieved at this her misfortune and danger.

About two days after the murder, Perina being arraigned for the same, freely confessed it in open court, having nothing to alledge in excuse of what she had done, but that she perfectly knew that her father-in-law Castelnovo, and his strumpet Jerantha, had at least poisoned the knight, her husband, if not likewise the lady Fidelia his mother; which they had some reason to suspect upon Jerantha's sudden flight: yet, since this could no way extenuate the murder of her father-in-law, they condemned the unfortunate Perina to be hanged, and therefore, sent her back to prison to prepare for death; but by the advice of some, who compassionated her youth and beauty, and who admired her chastity and affection to her husband, she was persuaded to appeal from the sentence of the court of Nice, to the Senate of Chambery, whither we shall shortly see her conducted. In the mean time let us observe the wonderful justice and providence of God, in the punishment of Jerantha, who, having shut herself up so privately, as to escape the present enquiry after her, yet did her bloody thoughts and guilty conscience continually torture her mind; and now did the dreadful news of Perina's sentence bring on her the pangs of child-birth, with such violent convulsions, that the midwife, and all the women about her, thought it would be impossible for her to escape death, which made her begin to look from sin to repentance, and lift her thoughts from earth to heaven, and so

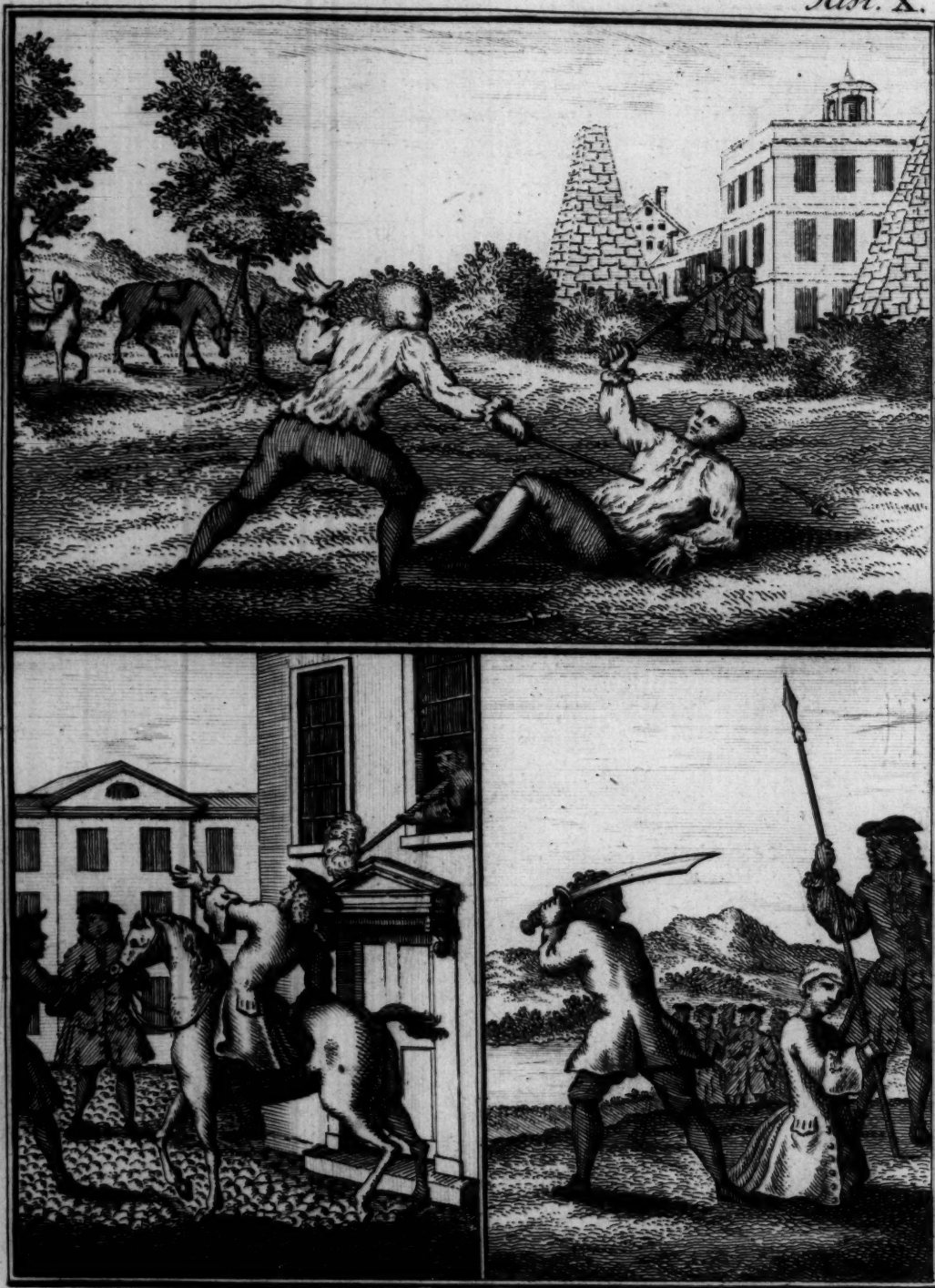
she very penitently confessed, not only her whoredoms, but murders, resting assured, that she shall be very speedily called out of the world; but her crimes were so odious in the sight of God, that he freed her from the dangers of her childbirth, that she might receive the shame and punishment due to her in this world; so being brought to bed of a fine boy, she was the next day committed to prison, and, on the third, she was hanged and burnt in Nice, and her ashes thrown into the air, without one spectator to pity her.

Let us now view Perina at Chambery, where the grave and illustrious senate of that city, in consideration of her most extraordinary chastity, and singular af-

fection to her husband, as also of her noble birth and tender years, moderate the sentence of Nice, and instead of hanging, adjudge her to have her right hand cut off, and to be kept in perpetual imprisonment, where God's secret justice for her bloody murder, and the remembrance of her dead husband, together with her living sorrows, did so sharply torment and afflict her, that she lived but a very short time, and ended her days in great penitence and sorrow; had she not given too much way to the transports of her revenge, she might have lived as happy as she died miserable, and been as great an ornament to her country, as old Castelnovo and Jerantha were a shame and scandal to it.





Hist. X.

GOD's REVENGE

A G A I N S T

MURDER and ADULTERY.

H I S T O R Y X.

A R G U M E N T.

Bertolini seeks Paulina in Marriage, but she is in Love with Sturio; he therefore prays her Brother Brellati, his intimate Friend, to solicit for him, which he doth, but to no Purpose: Whereupon Bertolini lets fall some Words disgraceful both to the Brother and Sister; upon which Brellati challenges him into the Field; Bertolini kills him, and flies for the same. Sturio being desirous to marry Paulina, his Father will not consent to it, but privately conveys him away, for which two Misfortunes Paulina dies with Sorrow. Sturio finds out Bertolini, and sends him a Challenge; but having him at his Mercy, gives him his Life, who afterwards very treacherously kills him from a Window in the Street. He is taken for this second Murder, has his Hands cut off, and his Body ordered to be thrown into the Fire.

THE friendship between Signor John Baptista Bertolini, and Signor Leonardo Brellati, two noble young gentlemen of Rome, was so very extraordinary for the space of six years, that they seemed to have but one mind in two bodies; they had been school-fellows,

and were near neighbours, their parents dwelling between the palaces of the two cardinals Farnesi and Caponius; the only disparity between them consisted in this, that Bertolini's parents were richer than Brellati's, but Brellati's were more nobly descended; however, this did not hinder the

the progress of their friendship, which still increased with their years, and the stronger to unite their friendship, Bertolini cast his eyes on the sister of Brellati, named Paulina, whom he admired for a thousand charms, and whom by all the honourable means imaginable, he sought in marriage; and endeavoured to give her the strongest proof of his love by oaths, vows, tears, and sighs, but all these did but betray his hopes, for she was resolutely bent against him. He then had recourse to her brother, his friend Brellati, to whom he related the fervency of his passion for his sister Paulina, and acquainted him with his suit, and her denial; and, by all the power and bonds of their former friendship, conjured him to become his advocate to her, which he promised, and accordingly made use of his best eloquence to bring her to listen to his suit; but she, in absolute terms, prayed her brother to inform Bertolini, that she had otherwise settled and engaged her affection, and therefore prayed him to seek another mistress.

Her brother, for his friend's sake, was much concerned at this, and begged his sister to name her servant to him, which she consented to, having bound him by oath to secrecy, and informed him, that it was signor Paulus Sturio, a very noble person of that city: he told her Sturio was more noble than rich; but she replied, that Bertolini was more rich than noble; and, therefore, she would refuse him and marry Sturio. He continued obstinate in his request, and she as resolute in her denial; so having performed the part of a friend, he delivered Bertolini her definitive answer, yet performed his promise to his sister in concealing the name of Sturio.

Bertolini was all on fire at this news, and began now no longer to look on his friend Brellati with the eyes of affection, but of contempt and indignation; and, in the heat of his wrath, so far forgot himself, that he went abruptly out of the room from him, as if he was no longer worthy the compliment of a bare adieu. Brellati observing this, was much grieved at it, since his friendship was such, that he would at any time have sacrificed his life and best services for him. This was the first breach or violation of friendship between them, but a second soon followed, far worse than this; for within two days after, meeting some company in the galleries of the cardinal Farnesi, who were friends and acquaintance to Brellati, as well as himself, he was so ungenerous, that upon their enquiring after his friend, he hastily replied, that he was a beggarly fellow, and that therefore he should henceforth avoid his company; and that his sister Paulina was a lascivious and dissembling strumpet. These words fell not to the ground, for some of the company then present; that very night, reported them to Brellati.

It is impossible to express with what concern he heard these words of his once dear beloved friend; and he was the more afflicted, when he was informed that his sister Paulina was likewise acquainted with the injustice he had done her. As she was too impatient to relish this scandalous affront, so the brother had too much spirit to digest it: burning to be satisfied of the truth, and vowing a sharp revenge on Bertolini, if he disowned not the words that were told him, he passed away the night in restless and distracted slumbers. Early next morning
Brellati,

Brellati, taking his sword and lacquey with him, went to Bertolini's house, where first meeting his father, he enquired of him after his son, who informed him that he was in the garden walking very solitarily, and prayed him to go to him. He needed not many invitations, and going towards Bertolini with his hat in his hand, but pale with anger, was received with the same courtesy by the other, who was red with shame, Brellati desired him to send his servants out of the garden, because he had something to impart to him that needed no witnesses; and then charged him with the words spoken against his own, and his sister's honour, in the palace of the cardinal Farnesi, in the presence of signor Fontani, signor Pluvinió, and signor Antonio Voltomari.

Bertolini was no ways dismayed with this charge, but, with fire in his looks, and thunder in his voice, told Brellati, that he confessed those words were his, and that what his tongue then affirmed, his sword was ready to make good and justify: whereupon they both covered, and Brellati demanding of him, if that was his last resolution, he told him it was: then, said he, expect mine shortly; so without taking any leave, they parted. Paulina, having notice of her brother's speaking with Bertolini, very carefully waited his return, when going into his chamber, with tears and sighs, she demanded of him the issue of his conference with him, and whether he was so impudent as to persist in what he had said; but her brother, like a noble Roman, was too generous and brave to acquaint her with his resolution; and then, in general terms, begged her not to af-

flict herself, for that this difference would be soon ended to her honour, and his own content. "Brother, said she, if you will not right my honour, and vindicate the unspotted purity of my reputation, I am sure my faithful lover Sturio will, though at the hazard of his life." "He shall not need, replied Brellati, for a day or two will reconcile and finish this affair." His sister then left him, and he sat down and wrote the following challenge, which he sent by signor Valerio, a friend of his, immediately after dinner:

BERLLATI to BERTOLINI.

"YOUR scandalous reports, like yourself, are so base, and I and my sister so honourably descended, that I doubt not but the disgrace and disparagement, which you have unjustly offered us, will as justly retort upon yourself. You shall find that my sword is capable to chastize your tongue; therefore, as you are a Roman, you and a gentleman, meet me single, tomorrow at five in the morning, without Port Populi, in the field, next behind the palace of cardinal Barromeo, and there I will give you your choice of two good rapiers and poniards, and willingly accept the refusal, that I may be able to draw a reason from you, for having so injuriously and maliciously traduced us. You can give me no other satisfaction but this, therefore fail not to meet

"BRELLATI."

Valerio having delivered this challenge to Bertolini, he accepted the same. As soon as the appointed time grew near the next morning,

" in mine ; and doubt not, but a few
 " weeks will make us as happy as we
 " are now miserable.

" STURIO."

Paulina, in the midst of her sorrows, and the sickness that these had brought upon her, received this letter from her dear Sturio, and although she rejoiced at his health and welfare in Capreæ, yet it did not drive out of her mind the thoughts of her own speedy end in Rome, for, vanquished by afflictions, and overcome with variety of griefs and misfortunes, she was in her own imagination, half way on her pilgrimage to heaven : yet love to her dear Sturio would not allow her to be so ungrateful, as not to answer his kind letter ; therefore, calling for pen and ink, she wrote as follows :

PAULINA to STURIO.

" I Cannot rightly determine whether
 " the receipt of your letter gave me
 " most joy, or the contents most sorrow ; for as I infinitely rejoice to understand that you are living and well,
 " yet I extremely grieve to find that you
 " have no certainty of a release from your
 " confinement ; I know not whether Capreæ be purgatory to you, but I am
 " sure Rome is worse to me without
 " your company. As I have lamented
 " that I could not die with my brother,
 " so do I no less that I cannot live with
 " you ; but why do I talk of living, when
 " his mournful tragedy, and thy wretched
 " exile, have made me more desirous of
 " death. As to Bertolini's folly to me,
 " and crime to my brother, no doubt,
 " but God's vengeance will punish him
 " for both, without the assistance of your

" sword, or the hazard of your life ; therefore, I pray thee leave him to that.
 " Could prayers or wishes have effected
 " any thing of that kind, I had long before now been with you, though more
 " than the Hellespont, or Mediterranean
 " sea, had divided us : I am obliged to
 " you for endeavouring to escape from
 " your confinement to me, but before
 " you can find means to get out of Capreæ, I shall have finished my course
 " at Rome. I would write more, but
 " that my weak head and feeble fingers
 " have not longer power to assist me ;
 " heaven will make us happy, though
 " earth cannot. Let this, therefore,
 " my dear Sturio, be our last consolation, that as the joys of one are but
 " temporary and transitory, those of the
 " other will be permanent and eternal.

" PAULINA."

This letter of Paulina obtained a speedy passage to Capreæ, where it was opened by Sturio with all imaginable transports of joy ; but how suddenly were all those turned to sorrow when he read the account of her illness, and her apprehension of death ; but alas ! this was but the beginning of his woe, for, within twenty days, he received advice of her being really dead. Old Sturio at Rome rejoiced as much at the death of Paulina, as her own parents were grieved at it ; and now he proposed as much happiness to himself in the return of his son, as he had given himself pain in forcing him away, for what he thought very good reasons ; and accordingly dispatched a servant with a letter to recall him ; but the news of Paulina's death at Rome could give him very little relish for that place, nor could
 he

he easily forgive the cruelty of his father in forcing him away, which, he did not doubt, was one means of hastening her death; the other was that of Bertolini's killing her brother, and wounding her own reputation, and therefore he vowed to himself to be revenged on them both.

His father deceived his hopes in carrying him from Rome to Capreae, so will he deceive his in carrying himself from Capreae to Sicily, there to find out Bertolini, and to call him to an account for his misdeeds; accordingly finding a galley of Naples, bound from Capreae to Sicily, he very secretly embarked thereon, and contemning the dangers of the seas, sailed for Palermo, where, hushing himself up privately the first night of his landing, and having got information that Bertolini was in that city, the next morning sent him the following challenge by his lacquey:

STURIO to BERTOLINI.

"**H**AVING killed the fair Paulina by thy villainous attack upon her honour, and by the death of her brother Brellati; my affection for her was so great when living, and my sorrow now so great for her death, that in revenge of her wrongs, I condemn my own life, to take the forfeit of your's; to this purpose I have left Capreae for Sicily; wherefore, if you would maintain the character of a gentleman, fail not to meet me this evening, betwixt five and six o'clock, in the next meadow behind the Carthusian monastery, where myself, assisted only by a surgeon, will expect and attend you, with the choice of two single rapiers, for

"there needs to be no other guests at this bloody banquet than yourself and
"STURIO."

Bertolini having received this challenge read it, but not with so much pleasure as he did that of Brellati, the ground of the quarrel he knew to be bad, for he was convinced in his own conscience, that Paulina was as chaste as fair, and that he had wronged himself in seeking to wrong and scandalize her; besides, he knew perfectly well that Sturio was brave and expert at all weapons, and therefore much feared that he was reserved to do justice on him for the death of Brellati and his sister; however, considering his blood and high birth, it was impossible for him to refuse the challenge; wherefore, he sent for answer to Sturio, by his lacquey, that he would not fail to meet him, and give him his welcome to Palermo.

Before the appointed hour fix, both the young gentlemen were in the field, giving their horses to the surgeons, they ordered them not to stir from the spot where they were, till the duty of their office should oblige them to it: so they both drew, and approaching each other, Sturio warded off Bertolini's thrust, and run him into the right flank, with a deep wound; at the second he wounded him again in the neck, which drew much blood from him; neither was their next meeting more propitious to Bertolini, for Sturio, without receiving any hurt himself, gave him a third wound among the small ribs, whereat his courage failed him, and being faint, he was willing to save his life with the loss of his honour; so throwing away his rapier, he begged his life of Sturio, and confessed, that he was truly penitent and

F f

sorrowful

forrowful for the words he had spoken against the chaste Paulina, and therefore craved pardon and forgiveness. Sturio was astonished at this unexpected and cowardly act of Bertolini, which made him bite his lips rather with disdain than anger; only at first the remembrance of Brellati and Paulina's deaths made him deliberate whether he should grant his request; but at length, reason giving law to his choler, and religion to his revenge, he resolved not to stain the name of a Christian, nor the lustre of his blood by a deed so dishonourable, as taking the life of a disarmed man. So holding himself satisfied in having righted the honour of his dead mistress Paulina, by Bertolini's confession and repentance; they walked together like friends into the city, where Sturio prepared for his departure, and Bertolini put himself under the care of his surgeon.

This duel was not so secretly transacted, but that all Palermo talked of it; and not only so, but an account of it was also carried from Sicily to Naples, and from thence to Rome, where Sturio and Bertolini soon after arrived; Sturio came first, then Bertolini, whose father by this time had obtained his pardon for killing Brellati. People there spoke differently of this transaction; some highly applauded Sturio for fighting with Bertolini, in revenge of his dead mistress's honour; some commended his humanity and courtesy, in giving his antagonist his life, but others condemned him for not dispatching him; again, many extolled Bertolini's valour in his combat with Brellati, but all taxed him with cowardice in not fighting it out with Sturio, and which was worse, for disgracefully begging and

receiving his life from him. Bertolini, finding himself the subject of every one's discourse, and his reputation suffering in every one's opinion, was moved to such extreme wrath, that not remembering the obligations he had to Sturio, vowed to be revenged on him for the liberty of his tongue; from henceforth his thoughts were so taken up with the execrable and hellish resolution of this murder, that he could admit nothing else into them; to fight him again in the field he dared not, and to assassinate him in his bed he could not, because there were five or six chambers to pass through, before he could come at his, and to pistol him in the open street, although it was less difficult, yet it was most dangerous, as Sturio was always better followed and accompanied than himself, being far more eminent both in birth and fortune: but as none of these means were sufficient, the devil put it in his head at length to shoot Sturio from a window, with a petronel, as he passed along the street.

Upon this he resolved; and in this bloody resolution let us leave him for a while, to speak a little of the unfortunate Sturio, who, not dreaming of the malicious and bloody revenge intended against him, like a mournful and disconsolate lover, was still ruminating on the melancholy idea of his lost Paulina; and although he knew it to be weakness to give way to immoderate sorrow, yet could not refrain from often stealing into the church of the Rotundo, where she was buried, and there secretly bedewing her sepulchre with his tears: all the care of his father and friends was to seek how to purge this melancholy humour, and restore him to himself; to which end, they

they proposed many wealthy and noble matches to him, hoping that the sight of some new beauty might deface the memory of the old; but their policy was all in vain, for the generous Sturio was resolved to be as constant in his sorrows for his sweet Paulina's death, as he was in his affection to her whilst she lived; and, therefore, although by their power they forced him to see divers, yet could he by no means be forced to love any, having inviolably contracted himself to this definitive resolution, that since he could not be Paulina's husband, he would have no other wife than his grave; and this wife alas he soon possessed! for Bertolini, still obstinate in his malice, and implacable in his revenge, understanding that Sturio was accustomed to go to morning mass at the English college, he provided himself with a petronel, charged with a brace of bullets, and so watching the advantage of the hour, a little after the cardinals Farnesi and Caponius were ridden with their trains to the consistory, he putting himself into an unknown house, betwixt the English college, and the palace of Farnesi, and keeping his petronel cocked, as soon as he saw Sturio coming by on horseback, let fly at him, and the devil had made him so sure a marksman, that he lodged both bullets in his breast. Our innocent Sturio, no longer able to sit his horse, tumbled down dead on the ground, uttering only two or three deep groans.

This bloody tragedy acted on a person of such rank, in the very bowels of Rome, extremely amazed the whole city; and his two servants who walked by his horse's side, being so busy in lifting him up, and rubbing the temples of their dead master,

that they forgot to seek after the murderer; yet some of the standers by, not only hearing the report of the piece, but seeing the smoak from the window, ascended the house, and there found the petronel on a table, but were informed that the person who discharged it had made his escape by a back door, and rode away with great speed.

The serjeants and guards of Rome were very busy to find out the murderer, who was soon discovered to be Signor Bertolini; but he being very well mounted posted through the streets, not at all doubting to recover the Latern gate, and by this means to escape this second danger, as luckily as he had the first, by getting into the kingdom of Naples: but in this his hopes deceived him, for having swiftly galloped over the Campo de Fuogo, and being got to the farther end of it, with an intent to draw to the back side of the capitol, two bricklayers that were on a scaffold, two stories high, against an house in the street, as Bertolini passed by, fell down, scaffold and all, and brought him and his horse to the ground with them.

But the news of Sturio's murder not having got so far, there was no one to stop him, and the fear and danger he was in making him forget the hurt of his fall, he again leaped into his saddle, and spurred away with as much celerity as the jennet could carry him. But though he escaped this first judgment of God, yet did he not the second, for having passed the capitol and the amphitheatre, his horse, between that and the Latern, fell under him, and split his shoulder, so that he could not rise with his master; whereupon being amazed, and fearing that

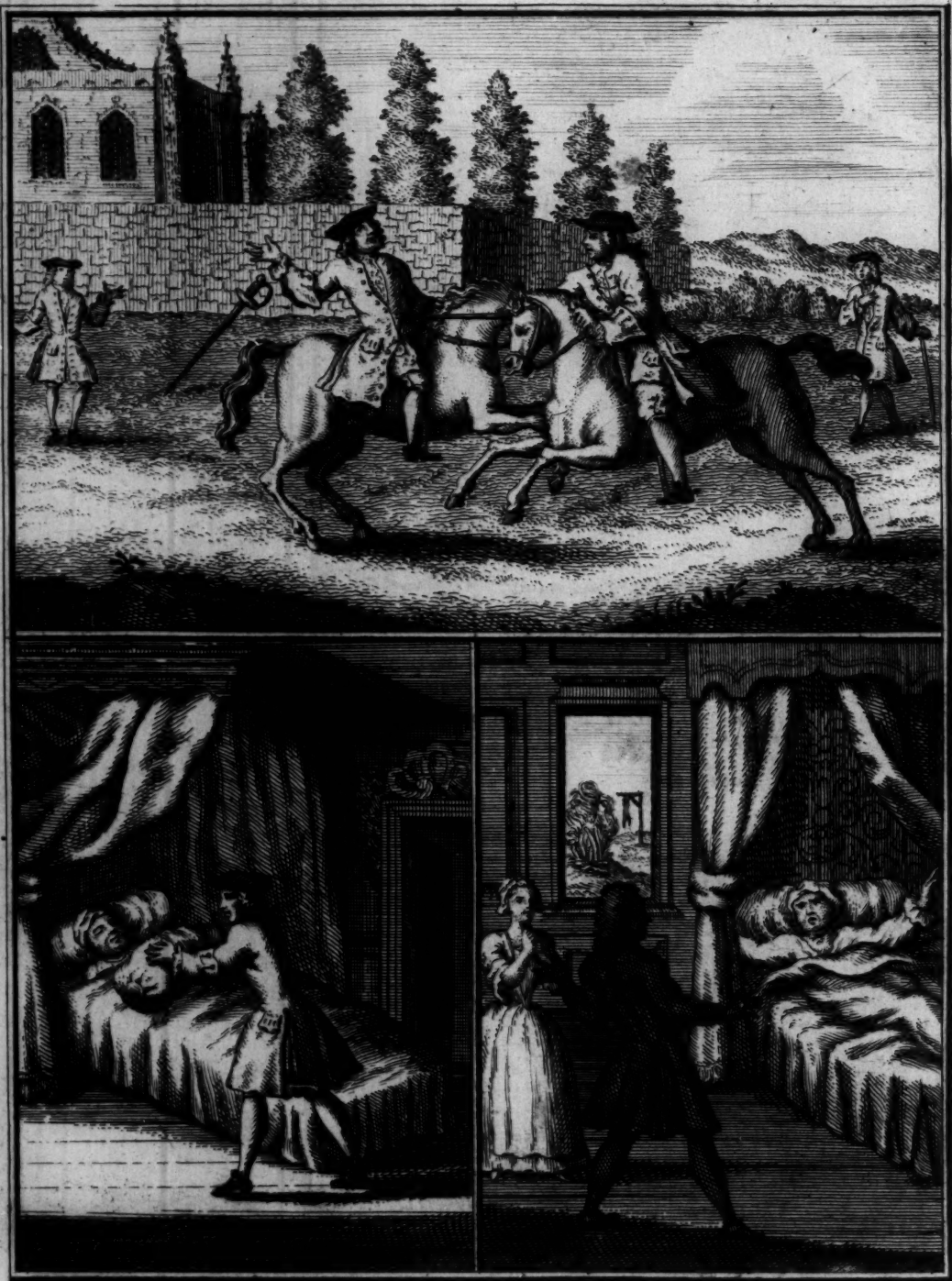
that the search would instantly overtake him, he left his horse, and betook himself to his own heels; but being greatly terrified both in mind and conscience, he knew not whither to go, or where to hide himself: one while he turned to the right, towards the Horto Farnesi, but then again fearing there might be no door open to receive him, he changed that resolution, and as fast as his feet could carry him on his left, towards the tower of Nero, so noted for that Emperor's infamy, in standing thereon to see the whole city on fire; and here, in the ruins of a vast number of palaces, churches, and other stupendious buildings, our murderer Bertolini hid himself, hoping when the day was past, to escape and recover some friend's house by night; but God was too just to let him escape so, for he had been there scarce half an hour, before he was found out, and hemmed in on all sides by the city guard, armed with partizans and firelocks.

Here Bertolini, considering himself a Roman gentleman, would fain have made some resistance with his rapier, but seeing their numbers increase, and thinking it would but augment his crime, and ex-

asperate his judges against him, he yielded himself up into their hands, who presently conveyed him to prison.

A few days after, when he was first called before his judges, he had some thoughts of denying the murder of Sturio, but then recollecting that it could be of little service to him, he confessed it freely, humbly beseeching them to take pity on his youth, the heat of which had been the only occasion of his guilt; but his judges were deaf to his requests, telling him, that there could be no pardon for a crime like his, for expiation of which, in consideration of his being a Roman gentleman, and nobly descended, they would not hang him, but adjudge his two hands to be cut off, before the house where he shot Sturio, and then afterwards to be beheaded at the common place of execution, at the foot of St. Angelo's bridge; his head to be set upon a pole over St. John de Lateran's gate, and his body to be thrown into the Tyber; which the next morning was accordingly executed in the presence of many thousand people, of both sexes, notwithstanding the strong solicitations his father made in his favour.





GOD'S REVENGE

AGAINST

MURDER and ADULTERY.

HISTORY XI.

ARGUMENT.

De Salez kills Vaumartin in a Duel, murders his own Father, that he may marry La Hay, a Strumpet, who afterwards cuts his Throat: She hires Michael to poison La Frange, for which Crimes La Hay hath her Right Hand cut off, and is burnt, Michael is broke on a Wheel, and De Salez's dead Body hanged and burnt.

IN the city of Tholouse, in France, there lived a counsellor, whose name was monsieur Argentier, a widower, who had one only son, called De Salez, of two and twenty years of age, whose martial temper, which inclined him to the wars, being unpleasing to his father's quiet disposition, after he had seen one campaign, he endeavoured to divert him from the thoughts of another, by offering to his choice several noble, rich, and virtuous ladies, out of whom he desired him to take a wife, and more par-

ticularly recommended to him La Frange, the only daughter of Monsieur de Clugny, very young, a lady of great accomplishments, though somewhat mis-shapen in her body. The fathers had already agreed upon the match, and appointed a meeting for their children, which produced different effects. La Frange, who was of an amorous disposition, no sooner saw De Salez, who was tall; handsome, and well made, but she fell desperately in love with him; he, on the contrary, could entertain no thoughts, but what were

G g

vastly

vastly to the disadvantage of madamoiselle La Frange.

At the same time there was a nobleman in the neighbourhood, called the Baron Vaumartin, who, to repair the debaucheries of his youth, and the extravagance of his high living and gallantries at Paris, returning to Tholouse, laid close siege to La Frange, well knowing how wealthy the President, her father, was, and that he had no other child to inherit his estate; but, whatever his pretences were, he had but little respect for her person, yet was weak enough to imagine, as he was deformed himself, that she might like him for the resemblance there was in their persons, though that was the cause of his having no real raptures for her. The father and daughter had put him off from time to time with many verbal compliments, and he was at last acquainted, that his suit would be but vain and fruitless, for De Salez was the happy man, who had entirely the possession of her heart.

De Salez, in the mean time, was grown acquainted with monsieur Soulange, a gentleman of a small estate, but who had three daughters famed for their beauty through the whole city, of whom madamoiselle La Hay, the youngest, was the most admired. De Salez, who had contracted a friendship with monsieur Soulange, that he might have the better colour to visit his daughters, as other young sparks of the town did, grew passionately in love with La Hay, who, as she was exceeding beautiful, so did she in her mien and behaviour appear with all the graces of modesty and goodness: but though in publick she seemed an unspotted virgin, yet she was in private a wanton

courtezan; nor was she so secret in her lascivious delights, though she obliged her gallants to conceal her favours, yet she was suspected of dishonesty by all chaste and virtuous persons. Amongst others of her enamourato's, De Salez was one, who, doating on her delicate complexion, and counterfeited modesty, spent all his hours in visits to La Hay, and with his best art and policy laid siege to her chastity; but such was her subtilty, that knowing he loved her, and was the only son of a rich counsellor, she resolved to decoy him for her husband, and would not, by all his costly treats and constant solicitations, be won to his embraces, and consent to his lustful desires.

This folly of De Salez, and subtilty of La Hay, was not managed with that privacy, but Argentier, his father, took notice of it, and considering Soulange's mean extraction and poverty, and his own nobility and wealth, was highly incensed with De Salez for his courtship to La Hay; he told him she was a strumpet, and swore if he did not leave her, and marry La Frange, he would disinherit him, and never look upon him as his son. But De Salez was resolute in his folly, and contemning his father's advice, privately contracted himself to La Hay, and promising as soon as providence should be so kind to him to call his father into another world, he would consummate the espousals.

In the mean time the Baron of Vaumartin, seeing all his addresses to La Frange were unsuccessful, and his debts and creditors growing clamorous upon him, and considering with himself that so long as De Salez lived, to whom La Frange had entirely devoted herself, he must

must never expect to be happy in her arms; therefore to remove this obstacle, concluded to send him a challenge, since it would appear more noble and generous to kill him in the field, than privately murder him by poison or poniard. The next day by his page he sent him this letter:

VAUMARTIN to DE SALEZ.

“ IF you seek the cause of my malice,
 “ you may find it in the lady La
 “ Frange’s affection to you, and hatred
 “ to myself; wherefore think it not
 “ strange, that I command my pen to
 “ invite you and your sword to meet me
 “ at five in the morning to-morrow, on
 “ horseback, without seconds, behind the
 “ Jacobin’s garden. Could that sweet
 “ lady have affected me more, or you
 “ less, we might have proved as true
 “ friends, as now our reputations con-
 “ jure us to live or die honourable ene-
 “ mies.

“ VAUMARTIN.”

De Salez having received and read this challenge, was not a little surprized at it, considering that he neither regarded La Frange, nor sued for her affection; but lest Vaumartin should think by his declining the combat, it was for want of courage to meet him, then calling the page, bade him tell his master, that he would not fail to breakfast with him at the time and place appointed. The morning being come, our champions met bravely mounted, with each his surgeon, at the place of assignation, where they no sooner saw each other, but setting spurs to

their horses, they closed furiously, and at the third encounter, De Salez run Vau-
 martin through the body, when dropping his sword he fell dead from his horse to the ground. De Salez galloped to the next village to dress his wounds, and then provided for his safety by flight; all persons rejoiced at the good success of De Salez, whose father and friends, with much difficulty, obtained his pardon; but no sooner was he returned, but he renewed his visits to La Hay, to the great grief and dissatisfaction of his father and all his relations: some time after, Argentier being obliged, upon some considerable business to go to Paris, he both advised and charged his son to forbear his visits to La Hay during his absence; and, for fear he should forget his commands, wrote the following letter to him upon the road:

ARGENTIER to DE SALEZ.

“ IT is out of a religious and fatherly
 “ tendernefs, that I now write to you,
 “ for your youth cannot see, what my age
 “ knows, how many miseries attend on
 “ vice, and how many blessings always
 “ accompany virtue. If La Frange is
 “ not fair, yet is she not contemptible;
 “ if therefore you will leave a faint to
 “ marry a strumpet, then take La Hay,
 “ and leave La Frange: but if you will
 “ forsake a strumpet to marry a faint,
 “ then take La Frange, and leave La
 “ Hay; in the first, you shall find con-
 “ tent and honour; but in the second,
 “ shame and repentance; this letter shall
 “ be a witness betwixt God, myself, and
 “ you, that if you obey not my com-
 “ mands,

"mands, I will deny you my blessing,
"and also deprive you of my lands.

"ARGENTIER."

De Salez was infinitely troubled at this letter, to see his mistress disgraced, and himself obliged to so difficult a task, that he was not able to hide his discontent from La Hay, who, desirous to know the cause of it, as he was one day asleep on the couch, dived into his pockets, where she found his father's letter; and having perused the contents with choler, awaked De Salez, and, with the letter in her hand, called heaven and earth to witness her innocence, and the wrong his father had done her; and said, that whatever, out of malice or prejudice, he might say or think, she hoped the world entertained a more favourable opinion of her, whose virtue was as chaste, and reputation as unspotted, as that of the envious and deformed La Frange.

De Salez, at last, with the most powerful expressions of the sincerity of his affection to her, appeased her wrath, and solemnly swore, that he never would be prevailed upon to forsake his admired La Hay for the hated La Frange. But she, being doubtful of the worst, and fearing that at some time or other the commands of the father might get the better of the son's resolution, like an impious wretch, contrived how to send her into another world, and for that purpose hired Bernardo Michael, an Italian empiric, for four hundred crowns, to undertake to poison her.

Michael considering what method he was to take, concluded at last to insinuate himself into De Clugny's company and

acquaintance; under the notion of a surgeon, who, by his great skill was able to reform the crooked body of the young lady his daughter, and accordingly furnished himself with several plausible reasons to induce him to believe it. This succeeded, and de Clugny having had a consultation of physicians and surgeons upon the matter, resolved to employ him, and gave him an hundred double pistoles in hand, with a promise of as much more when he had performed the cure.

Michael being thus employed, betook himself to his business; he applied plaisters and searcloths outwardly, and inwardly pills and potions, into which he infused the poison, which he assuredly knew in ten days time would send her into another world: whereupon he went privately to La Hay, to let her know what he had done, and she making him a fresh present, again swore him to secrecy, and so they parted.

Just at the expiration of the ten days, La Frange, to the unspeakable grief of her parents, died, but not without suspicion of poison, upon which Michael was apprehended; when La Hay, to prevent his making any discovery, secretly sent him an hundred crowns more, and promised him a rich diamond ring, which so wrought upon him, that when they put him on the rack to extort a confession from him, he out-braved his torments, denied the fact, and so was acquitted.

La Frange being thus dead, De Salez resolved to go to Paris to obtain his father's leave to marry La Hay; but the old gentleman, to prevent this, bought him a captain's commission, and contracted with monsieur Brianfon to marry De Salez

to

to his daughter, and had sent to his son to make haste to him at Paris, where, upon his arrival, he disclosed his intentions to him. De Salez obstinately refused both his commission and his new mistress, and would neither accept the one or the other: whereat his father, in a rage, swore he would disinherit him if he would not comply with his commands in three days. De Salez, mad on the other side, resolved to sacrifice every thing to his passion for La Hay, nay, determined even to murder his father, that he might be no longer an obstacle to it, and two days after found an opportunity to perpetrate his unnatural design; for supper being ended, old Argentier finding himself not well, ordered his clerk the next morning to go and bring Dr. De Sayon, an eminent physician, to him, who lived at the farther part of the city.

No sooner in the morning was the clerk gone, but De Salez stole privately into his father's chamber, and, finding him in a sound sleep, stifled him between two pillows, went out undiscovered, and speedily posted away to St. Honore's gate, and so to St. Cloud; the clerk returning from the physician, entered his master's chamber, and found him dead, and almost cold in his bed: at which sight, crying out, the master of the house came up, who vowed he saw no person enter the room, and that his son went out almost as soon as himself. The body was searched, but no wound appearing, it was concluded he died a natural death, upon which the corpse was nobly interred by De Salez, with all outward expressions of grief and sorrow.

De Salez having with all pomp and decency performed the funeral obsequies of

his father, in about eight days returned to Tholouse, where the old gentleman's death was much lamented by all but the wicked La Hay, and the son himself was so senseless and forgetful of his father's memory, and his own reputation, that in six weeks he threw aside his mourning, and in the most gaudy apparel solemnly married La Hay, at which the whole city were amazed.

Three months were hardly past after their marriage, before De Salez discovered the lascivious intrigues of his wife, whose adulteries had now made him a knight of the Forked Order; to prevent which, or at least conceal it, he persuaded her to reform her life, and complained to her father, but neither prevailed, for she was now grown so impudent, that she scorned her husband, and played the whore before his face with opened doors: whereupon he resolved to divorce himself from her, and took advice upon it, which coming to her knowledge, she vowed not to lose her share in his estate, which was very great, but to prevent him, and satisfy her own malice by a present and bloody revenge. To this end, watching an opportunity, when most of the servants were abroad at the vintage, she stole into her husband's chamber, and finding him soundly sleeping, she drew out a razor from her sleeve, stepped to him, and cut his throat; when throwing the razor and her taffata gown (which was all bloody) into the house-of-office, she secretly got out to church. De Salez, whose throat was not cut so fully through, but he could cry and groan, was overheard by two of his servants, who hastily coming up, heard him utter these speeches, "That
" frumpet my wife hath killed me: O

H h

" that

" that she-devil my wife hath murdered me !"

The sergants cried out at the window, and called in the neighbours, who sent for his confessor, and the lieutenant-criminal, to both which he said the same words, confessed the stifling of his father, and instantly died. Search was presently made for La Hay, who was found in the Dominican Friars church, at sermon, from whence she was dragged to prison, and charged with her husband's murder, which she confessed upon the rack, and was condemned to be hanged, and then burnt.

Being remanded to prison, some divines who were sent to her, so wrought upon her conscience, that she confessed farther how she had hired Michael, for four hundred crowns, to poison La Frange, of which the judges having notice, altered her sentence, and adjudged her to have her right hand cut off, and to be burnt alive. De Salez's body was ordered to be taken out of the grave, hanged by the heels at the common gallows, and then burnt.

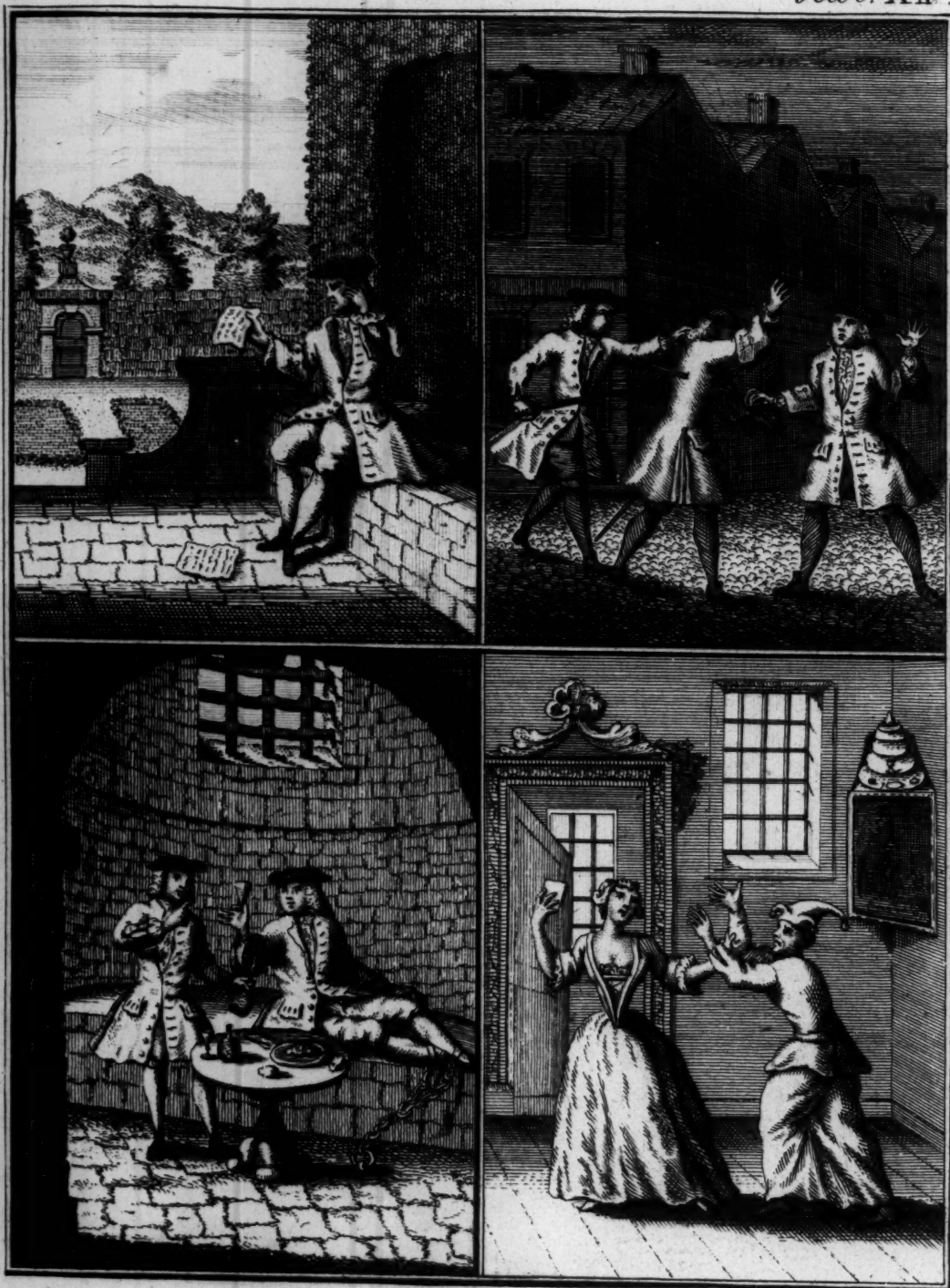
Michael, as soon as he heard of La Hay's imprisonment, fled towards Castres, disguised in a Friar's habit, with his beard shaven, yet by the care of the court of parliament, or rather by the immediate

finger and providence of God, he was found out, and brought to Tholouse, where, for poisoning La Frange, he was adjudged to be broken on the wheel, there to remain till he was dead, and then to have his body thrown into the river Gironde, which was accordingly executed to the great joy of an infinite number of spectators: but as he lived an atheist, so he died a desperado, without any shew at all, either of contrition or repentance, only he vomited forth words to this effect: " That as the world had so much to say to him, he had nothing to say to it:" but bade the executioner make haste and dispatch him.

Now, by this mournful and bloody tragedy, the Christian reader may observe, how God's revenge doth always triumph over murder; and how, in his due time and providence, he does assuredly detect and punish it. The disobedience of De Salez, is punished by the Disloyalty of La Hay, and the unnatural murder he had committed on his father, revenged by his adulterous and bloody wife, who is at last rewarded with the justice and severity of the law, whilst the wicked empirick, Michael, who lived in sin, died in shame; and having been a servant to the devil in his life, continued his martyr in death.

8A





GOD'S REVENGE

AGAINST

MURDER and ADULTERY.

HISTORY XII.

ARGUMENT.

Albemare causes Pedro and Leonardo to murder Baretano, and afterwards marries his Mistress Clara. He makes his Man Valerio poison Pedro in prison; and, by a Letter which Leonardo sends him, Clara perceives that her Husband Albemare had hired these two Ruffians to murder her first Lover Baretano; which Letter she reveals to the Judges, and Albemare, Valerio, and Leonardo are all executed.

IN the rich city of Milan, the capital of Lombardy, dwelt Capello and Castiana, a gentleman and lady of great rank and fortune, who had one only daughter named Clara, the greatest beauty in all Italy, and a young lady of the finest understanding, sweetest temper, and most excellent accomplishments. It was no wonder, therefore, that she had many admirers, but no one was so importunate, both with her parents and herself, as Signor Giovanni Albemare, a gen-

tleman of Milan, nobly descended, very rich, and about twenty-six years of age.

This was an offer which there could have been no objection to, had not Clara already settled her affections on another gentleman, younger than herself, but in all other respects, both as to the endowments of nature and fortune, every way his superior; this was Alphonso Baretano, a young gentleman of one of the noblest families of Milan, of about eighteen years of age, whose father was lately dead,

dead, and had left him sole heir to many rich lands and possessions, but withal exceedingly entangled in law, and engaged in many debts and mortgages, in which he was involved through the extravagance and prodigality of his youth, and which now falling on his son, proved an hindrance to his marriage, and a great obstacle to his content.

As Baretano, of all the beauties of Lombardy, admired Clara the most, so of all the Cavaliers in the world, Clara could like none so well as Baretano. A conformity of years and manners bred a sympathy in their affection, which had all along increased from their infancy, and was kept alive by the frequent opportunities they had of seeing one another, and being often together from the vicinity of their habitations. They sometimes met in publick, at balls and musick meetings, but much oftener by stealth in the walks and gardens adjoining to their own houses.

Their visits were now so constant that they were become habitual, and it was almost impossible for them to live without seeing and conversing with one another every day. Clara hearing a husband spoken of, infinitely wished that Baretano was her's, and whenever he heard the name of a wife, he fervently desired that Clara might be his. So sincere and so ardent were their desires to each other, that it would be difficult to tell in whom they were strongest, nor was it possible for them longer to keep their passion a secret; but Capello and Castiana having discovered it were displeased, because they had given a sort of promise to Albemare, that he should have their daughter; and his clear estate being much

more agreeable to their desires than the incumbered possessions of Baretano, for which reason they resolved to use all means to oblige her to prefer the first to the latter. And so they began in mild and gentle terms to demand of her what passed between her and Baretano, and whether she was so unwise as to prefer one of his distracted fortune, to the wealth and grandeur of Albemare? Clara, who was fixed in her affection, and unalterable in her esteem for Baretano, was prepared for all they could say, so with much modesty and discretion, and with a rising blush upon her cheek, she told them, " That she was very well convinced of Baretano's sincere and generous regard for her, although he had never yet mentioned marriage, which, if he had, considering his birth, his fortunes, and his virtues, were such as might not only claim her equal but superior, she hoped they would excuse her if she declared, that she should in her own choice, prefer him to any other man in the whole world."

This modest answer Capello and Castiana thought too peremptory for a child to give her parents; and that it favoured more of an ungovernable affection to Baretano, than due respect and obedience to themselves; however, the sooner to divert her from her own resolutions and desires, and to make her the more flexible to theirs, they held it fit rather to maintain a mild than imperious behaviour towards her for a while. And taking all opportunities of depreciating the merits of Baretano, and extolling those of Albemare, they endeavoured to represent the first only as a foil, to set off the lustre of the other, whom they painted in all the beautiful

beautiful colours that the most persuasive oratory could bestow; but love and Clara beheld him still with different eyes from avarice and ambition, and she once more with interrupting sighs, answered her parents, that she thought Baretano, in all the endowments and perfections both of mind and person, as far exceeded Albemare, as the meridian sun exceeds the artificial light of a simple taper; but yet that her resolutions and behaviour might correspond with her obedience to them, although she loved Baretano for his and her own sake, yet she would never hate Albemare for theirs, but as to making him her husband, she hoped that neither heaven nor earth have decreed that, which would destroy all that she could account her happiness on earth.

Capello and Castiana seeing their daughter Clara so obstinate, put her in mind of the blessings which infallibly attend filial obedience, and of the curses and miseries that wait on such as oppose the will and inclinations of their parents, and then left her for that time. Albemare having a constant correspondence with them, was acquainted with all that passed; and was advised by them to ply her close, and to let slip no occasion of being with her; they thought it also not amiss for him to declare his passion publicly, and let all Milan know the honour he did her by his addresses. Albemare followed this advice, and thus authorized by her parents, haunted her in every place where she was, both at home and abroad. Capello's house was now become his own, as he flattered himself his daughter should soon be: if Clara went privately to mass or vespers, Albemare was with her; if more publicly she visited the Domo,

or cathedral church, then he waited her coming out at the porch stairs, sometimes with his coach, but oftener, as was the custom of Milan, on his foot-cloth and prancing Barbary horse, to conduct her home; and that he might be wanting in no compliment becoming an accomplished cavalier, he made her many costly presents, and entertained her with several serenades and concerts of the finest musick that could be procured, but all this notwithstanding, and although her father and mother left no means untried to bend her to their will, yet still was she so constant in her love, and so faithful to her dear Baretano, that she looked as a saint at Albemare, and all his proffered services, giving him such general answers, and cold entertainment, that he could see but little hopes of bringing her to a compliance.

Whereupon he had again recourse to her parents, who, seeing fair means could not prevail upon their daughter, did now determine to use force, and to add threats to their commands, and choler to their persuasions; but the first availed not, no more did the second; for she told them plainly, that she neither could nor would affect any man enough to make him her husband, except Baretano, nor would she marry him without their consent.

Whilst Albemare was publicly making his court to Clara, no less did Baretano in private; if Albemare followed her to the cathedral, Baretano had frequent opportunities of seeing her in the little remote churches and chapels, wherewith Milan abounds, and if they violated the sanctity of the place, by conferring and cherishing their affections, yet did they desire to sanctify their affections by crown-

ing them with the religious tie of marriage. But as private as those meetings were between our lovers, yet had Capello and Castiana intelligence thereof, and were greatly grieved at it, and now came the time for them to shew the first marks of their disesteem to Baretano, for it being agreed between him and Clara, that he should come to make proposals to her parents; he had no sooner mentioned the affair to them, but they gave him a flat denial, and not only that, but forbade him their house.

This injunction, hard as it was, Clara seemed to comply with, and did not permit him to visit her at home; but when they were sleeping in their beds, then she met her dear Baretano, in the close arbours and walks of the garden; but they could not carry on those assignations so secretly, but Capello and his wife had exact intelligence of them from some of their trusty servants, whom they had purposely appointed to be spies upon them. Upon which they suddenly, and in as private a manner as possible, sent away their daughter from Milan to Modena in their coach, there to be pent up by the lady Amelia her aunt, and, besides her waiting maid Adriana, none accompanied her but Albemare, whose presence they hoped, in a small time, and importunate solitations, might deface the memory of Baretano.

Clara, seeing herself thus exiled, and prohibited the society of him whose company was her sole delight, drowned herself in an ocean of tears, and bitterly complained to herself of the cruelty of her parents, and bewailed her own hard fate. The same did Baretano at Milan, when he found himself deprived of the

presence of her, whose love was all his joy, and all the happiness he wished to know. Notwithstanding Capello and Castiana were very careful in watching the motions of Baretano in Milan; and Albemare was no less so in attending on, and paying his devoirs to Clara in Modena; yet as fire suppressed flames forth with more violence, and checked rivers overflow with great impetuosity; so in despite of the vigilance of one, and the jealousy of the other, though Baretano could not be so happy as to ride over to Modena to see her, yet love contrived means to visit her by letters; but as all access to her was very difficult, he was forced to send them by subtle ways and secret messengers; among the rest, making use of a friar and a hermit, for the conveyance of two, which they, as fit agents for such amorous employments, with more cunning and fidelity than zeal or religion, safely delivered, and as safely brought back her answers. The first letter which Baretano sent Clara by the friar, was as follows:

BARETANO to CLARA.

“ **H**OW justly may I account myself
 “ unfortunate who am forced to be
 “ miserable, before I know what belongs
 “ to happiness? For if ever I found any
 “ true content, or heaven upon earth, it
 “ was in your desirable company, the
 “ want of which, by your sudden-depart-
 “ ure, now makes my own thoughts,
 “ at least a purgatory, if not a hell to
 “ me. Oh! what a matchless and heart-
 “ killing terror it is to me, to know that
 “ you are captive to my rival, and that
 “ the fates and your parents seem to be
 “ so

“ so propitious to his desires, and so inexorable and cruel to mine, that I must live in Milan alone without you, and he alone must enjoy your company to himself in Modena. If I have sense or shadow of comfort in this my calamity, it is in this, as you carried away my heart with you, you will vouchsafe to send me yours in exchange, with your answer to this. For if you neither bring me yourself, nor send me that, I may be fought in Milan, but shall be found only in heaven. Was I privileged by thy consent, much more authorized by your command, I would fly rather than post to you; for dear Clara, as you are my sole joy and sovereign felicity; so, whilst I breathe the air of life, your will shall be my law, and your commands the compass by which I will steer my actions.

“ BARETANO.”

Her answer returned by the friar to Baretano at Milan, was to this effect:

CLARA to BARETANO.

“ IT is for none but ourselves to judge how equally we participate and share of misery, in being deprived of each other’s company. You call your absence either purgatory or hell, but my affliction and torment is so great for thine, that I think I have all the reason in the world to look upon them, not only as one but both. You are mistaken as to my Thrakdom, for although Albemare vows himself my captive, I disdain to be his, and both vow and triumph to be only Baretano’s.

“ no’s. I know not whether I have brought your heart with me to Modena; but sure I am, that I left mine with you at Milan. If my parents seem now pleasing and propitious to him, I am yet so far from despair, that I confidently hope the fates will not prove cruel and inexorable to you, and in you to myself: but rather that a little time will change their resolutions, since no time can alter our affections and constancy. If Clara be thy sole joy and felicity, no less is Baretano her’s: and although I could either wish that you were here with me in Modena, or I with you in Milan, yet such is my aunt Amelia’s care, and Albemare’s jealousy, that were you in this city, it would be no small difficulty to see me, and yet a greater to speak with me; therefore let me advise you to lay aside the thoughts of coming hither, but, at the same time, let me conjure you never to forget that affection which would have been the cause of thy undertaking so fruitless a journey. Think that my continuance in this place, and exile from thee, shall be as short as the best of my invention can make it, or the means that my zeal to thee can suggest. In the interim, let us comfort ourselves, and visit each other, by the ambassadors of our hearts, I mean our letters; and depend on this, dear Baretano, that, during our absence from one another, whilst you feed on my idea, I shall feast on thine.

“ CLARA.”

Baretano’s letter, sent to Clara at Modena, by the hermit, was in these terms:

BARETANO-

BARETONA to CLARA.

“HAD not your last brought a prohibition, I had long since left Milan, to have seen Modena, and, what is the most valuable thing in it, yourself, my dear Clara: but since I cannot have that pleasure, it is some comfort to me think, that it is the excess of thy affection, and not want of it, that forbids my attending you: yet if some how or other I cannot be blessed with your sight, despair and sickness will soon put an end to my life, for if I cannot live with thee, I must die for thee.

“BARETANO.”

To this last, Clara returned the following answer:

CLARA to BARETANO.

“THE commands of my parents, the resolution of my aunt Amelia, and the vigilance of my suitor Albemare, have now reduced me to so strict a sequestration or rather imprisonment, that I have hardly time to tell thee of it: but as tempests are followed by calms, and showers by sunshine, so a little time may effect that, which my parents have hitherto denied, since violence is never permanent, and when things are at the worst they must mend. A thousand times a day I wish Modena were Milan, and as often that Albemare were metamorphosed into Baretano. Write no more of your sickness, least you hear of my death: cherish yourself for my sake, as I will your remembrance for my own.

“CLARA.”

By these fond letters the reader will see how firm and constant their loves were for each other. In the mean time, whilst Baretano entertained Clara with his letters, Albemare endeavoured the same with his discourse, but the first gave transport and rapture, the other always was, or seemed to be, flat and insipid.

Clara had reason in her last letter to term her sequestration in Modena an imprisonment, since the bounds of her aunt Amelia's two small gardens, and the wall of her little park, were the limits she was confined to, and within which she was, as it were, immured; for no farther was she permitted to go, except to church with her aunt in her coach, and then always accompanied by Albemare, who let slip no opportunity of seeing and been seen by her; but she herself was never better pleased than when alone. Sometimes she passed the irksome hours in the gardens, and sometimes in the park, at the hither end of which, not far from the second garden, was a curious walk, ranged with many rows of sycamore trees, and at the farther end of it a bower so closely veiled and overshadowed, that the rays of the sun could neither enter to scorch the pureness of her beauty, or contend with the lustre of her eyes. To this bower, Clara going one afternoon, sought to amuse the time by reading the old amorous history of Hero and Leander, which was lately reprinted in Milan, and which she took great delight in, on account of the conformity of their loves to her own: but besides this history, what gave sweeter musick to her thoughts, and harmony to her mind, were the two letters of her dear Baretano, which she had brought purposely with her to peruse, and

and which she read over and over again, and to say the truth, oftener than there were words or even syllables contained in them; and as often as she came to the name, she could not refrain from kissing it, and sometimes bedewing it with her tears.

But whilst she was in the midst of these passionate ecstasies, she seemed sometimes wrapped up in the heaven of joy, on the perusal of these her dear Baretano's letters, and then again plunged into the hell of sorrow, at the remembrance of his absence; she hearing soon after a voice not far from her, which at first she mistook for her woman's, who was in the garden gathering strawberries, and wild primroses; but looking out, she saw Albemare, who, knowing she was in the bower, was coming to pay his devoirs to her, which to prevent, being not at all desirous to be encumbered with so unwelcome a guest, she hastily folded up her letters in her handkerchief, and clapping them, as she thought, in the pocket of her gown, took her book in her hand, and calling Adriana, tripped away back towards the garden, by the other side of the park, on purpose to avoid him.

Albemare was grieved to see Clara's coyness and cruelty towards him, but although she was gone out of the bower, yet was he desirous to see the place where she had been, and so going to ascend the steps, he found the two letters, which it seems had slipped out of Clara's handkerchief, as she was putting them into her pocket. Albemare, on seeing the directions, was in hopes of gathering something from the perusal of them, that might advance the process of his suit: but when he had read the first, he was so extremely perplexed and afflicted, that he

had hardly patience enough to look into the other; yet running it over in haste and passion, and seeing by all the particulars of it, that it was in vain for him any longer to hope for Clara, since she was so much devoted to Baretano; like one grown frantick he stamped with his feet, threw away his hat, tore his hair, and was just going to offer violence to himself; but when the heat of his passion was somewhat allayed, and reason began to reassume her throne, he took up his hat again, and pulling it over his eyes, went into the house, and shewing the letters to the lady Amelia her aunt, she bade him not despair, for that, notwithstanding Baretano's letters, he himself should shortly marry her niece Clara; but she begged he would let her have the two letters, because she intended, with his leave, to send them to Milan the next day to her father and mother. He told her he would consider if that might be convenient, and so retired to his chamber to see if he could sleep away the vexatious thoughts that troubled his mind. And Clara, by this time, going to lock up her treasure, as she valued these letters, found her handkerchief, but those not in it; whereat blushing for shame, and then again turning pale with grief and anger, she sent away Adriana with all speed to the arbour to look for them; but she coming back without them, she was assured that Albemare had found them, whereupon for mere sorrow she feigned herself sick, and likewise withdrawing to her chamber, there presently betook herself to her bed.

Clara and Albemare having taken to their beds, love and grief did act their several parts so violently, that neither of them could have any rest: the occasion

of their griefs were very different, for as Clara's concern was that she had lost those letters, Albemare's uneasiness proceeded from his having found them, and as he vowed to himself not to restore them to her, so she disdained to ask him for them.

Albemare, being now convinced of the danger he was in from his rival, resolved the next morning to ride towards Milan to find him out, and oblige him to fight with him for this rich idol of both their hearts. To this purpose he was no sooner up, but he acquainted the lady Amelia with his intended journey, though not with his design of fighting Baretano; he did the same to Clara, desiring to be honoured with her commands at Milan, but she only desired he would present her humble duty to her father and mother, and so wishing him a good journey, he advanced to salute her at parting, which favour her civility, not affection, granted to him, and then he took horse, having only one servant with him.

Albemare being arrived at St. Remy, a small town within fifteen miles of Milan, resolved to dine there, which having done, he ordered his servant to get the horses ready, and in the mean time seeing the host, he asked him if there was any gentleman in his house going towards Milan, the host returned him this unexpected answer, that there was a very noble gentleman, named Baretano, who would be going that way in about two hours time. Albemare no sooner heard the name of Baretano, but his very heart's blood flashed in his face, when demanding of the host what sort of a man Baretano was, he answered, a tall, slender, young gentleman, with scarce a hair upon his face, and out of this window you may now

see him walking in the garden: Albemare looking out, saw indeed that it was his very rival Baretano, when enquiring of the host what followers he had with him, he told him, that at that time he had none, though sometimes he came thither attended by two or three servants.

Albemare seeing the rival he was going to seek thus brought to him, resolved upon a base and bloody undertaking, which was to set upon him on the highway disguised, and there venture his own life to deprive him of his, and that he might have no witness to this ignoble and treacherous business, he sent his man to Milan before him, and slipping into the town, provided himself with a vizard, then taking his horse, and rather like a thief than a gentleman, concealed himself by the side of a wood, about three miles from St. Remy, waiting for Baretano's coming, who, poor harmless young gentleman, harbouring no other thoughts or wishes, but charity to all mankind, and fervent affection to his dear Clara, took horse likewise, and was drawing towards Milan; when being arrived at the place where Albemare secretly laid in ambush for him, he furiously and suddenly rushed upon him, and, with his rapier, run Baretano into his right arm, who, feeling the wound almost as soon as he saw his enemy, was at first amazed at it, but then, by his mask, taking him to be one of the banditti who were then very busy in Lombardy, and especially about Milan, he told him, that all the coin he had, which was about ten double pistoles in gold, and two ducats in silver, were at his service, for he would not fight in defence of them, not said he, that I think myself a coward, but I

am

am very lately affianced to a young lady, whose affection I flatter myself to think is so great to me, that the loss or preservation of my life will be the same to her's. Albemare touched to the quick with these words, was wholly inflamed with choler against him, and rushing upon him more furiously than before, cried out, "Villain, it is not thy gold, but thy life that I seek." And then straining himself to run Baretano through, the string of his mask broke, upon which Baretano discovered him to be his rival Albemare, whereat, such was his zealous affection for Clara, that though before he turned craven, and would not fight for his own sake, he was now resolved not only to fight, but, rather than forfeit her to his rival, to die for her sake; and so returning the villain to Albemare, who was indeed more deserving that appellation, and at the same time drawing his rapier, joined him in battle.

If Albemare was resolute in fighting, no less valiant was Baretano; for the remembrance of Clara gave such vigour to his arm, and life to his courage, that dealing his blows roundly, and his thrusts so freely, he shewed Albemare his rapier was of excellent temper, but his heart of better. And Albemare, seeing he must buy his victory dearer than he expected, and disdaining to be outbraved and beaten by a boy, plucked up his spirits, and laying on with such earnestness that in less than a quarter of an hour he had given Baretano three wounds, but then he had received five himself; when the count Martingue, passing that way in his coach towards Milan, and seeing two gentlemen so desperately engaged, called out to his coachman to make all the haste he could to-

wards them; so alighting, he went up and parted them; but seeing them covered with blood, sweat and dust, and happening to have with him a gentleman who was a surgeon, he entreated them to accompany him to the next house, where he caused their wounds to be dressed and bound up; and knowing by their apparel that they were Milanese, he begged to know their quarrel, proffering his best assistance to reconcile them; but their hearts were so big, and their malice so implacable, that though they both thanked the count for his courtesy, yet they besought him to excuse their concealing their names and quarrel. The count was so generous notwithstanding, that he would not leave them so, but seeing them very much wounded, though not mortally, as he thought, for their greater ease and safety, caused two of his own gentlemen to mount their horses, and taking them both into his coach with him, brought them within the gates of Milan, where, after they had severally paid their compliments to each other, they took their leave.

Baretano and Albemare being thus arrived at Milan, concealed their fighting, but were both obliged to take to their chambers till their wounds were fresh dressed and in better order, and then Albemare visited Capello and his lady Castiana, and gave them an account of their daughter's health, and, as she desired, presented her duty to them, but withal informed them how averse she still was to his suit; he likewise shewed them Baretano's two letters to her, whereby it seemed apparent that she was wholly his, and that he had little ground to build any farther hopes upon; the father and mother were somewhat chagreened at the perusal

perusal of those letters; but at last bade him not despair, for he, and only he, should be their son-in-law; but Albemare having already fed cameleon-like on the air of their promises for at least six months, and seeing himself farther from his wishes than ever by the letters of Baretano and Clara, and seeing no prospect of Clara's consenting to be his, as long as Baretano was in this world, pursued his resolution of sending him to another. But this he meant not to do honourably and fairly like a gentleman, but treacherously and in the dark by poison, pistol, or some other base practice. While he was ruminating on what method he should take, the devil, who is never idle on such occasions, laid the following means before him; coming down the great steps of the cathedral church, he saw Pedro and Leonardo, two soldiers, or rather bravos of the castle of Pavia pass by him, with whom he had been formerly acquainted, but so poorly apparelled, that weighing their bloody humours by their necessities, he thought a little money would make them very fit agents of his hellish purpose. With this view he sent his man Valerio after them, praying them to come to him in the cloysters of Borromeo's palace, for that he had something to say to them much to their advantage. Upon their coming up to him, he renewed his acquaintance with them, and then swore them to secrecy in the business he was about to impart to them; which done, he told them, if they would undertake to dispatch Baretano in the street, by night, in a week's time, or thereabouts, and then to give out that he was murdered by some Spaniards of the viceroy's guard, he would give them an hundred ducatoons in hand,

and leave them as much more with his man Valerio, which they should receive when the business was over; because he intended, for his own part, to go in three or four days to Modena, that he might not be suspected to have any hand in it.

Pedro and Leonardo, seeing Albemare's gold, had no power to resist the temptation of it, but swore to be punctual in the performance of what he employed them in.

Albemare, having settled this bloody affair with Pedro and Leonardo, now thought of returning to Modena, being not only solicited so to do by Capello and Castiana, but charged with letters from them to their daughter, wherein they laid their strict commands upon her, and on their blessing enjoined her, to dispose of herself to him, and to think of no other for an husband. Albemare departed in a few days, but having revealed the secret of his fighting with Baretano, to one or two of Capello's principal servants, who loved their lady so well, that they sent a true relation of it to her at Modena, which arrived there the day before Albemare; so that when he delivered his letters to Clara, from her father and mother, she stepping aside to read them, returned to him with this bitter welcome: "Sir, my father and
" mother command me to love you, but
" how can I do that, when upon the
" highway you basely and treacherously
" attempted to murder my dear Baretano, whom I love a thousand times
" dearer than all the world." Then with tears in her eyes, and indignation in her countenance, she flung from him. As Amelia was much surprized at this behaviour, so was he both surprized and grieved.

Both

Both again betook themselves to their chambers. Albemare throwing himself on his bed, said to himself, "Unkind and cruel Clara, if you are thus tenderly moved at my fighting with Baretano, how will you brook the news of his death?" On the other side Clara grieved as much for Baretano's wounds as she rejoiced at his safety, and so tender was her affection for him, that she wished a thousand times, that the blood he had lost, had streamed from her own veins. Again, knowing his wounds were free from danger, she could not but smile and be delighted to see his dear and true affection to her, remembering, that tho' he would not fight for his own sake, yet he had so readily and gallantly ventured his life for her's. In those amorous contemplations and conceits she drove the time away, admiring in the mean while that she heard not from her Baretano: but, alas! she heard too soon, though indeed never more from him; for those execrable wretches Pedro and Leonardo, about three days after Albemare's departure to Modena, like butcherly and inhuman villains performed their bloody promise with him, cruelly assaulting and most treacherously murdering the harmless young gentleman in the streets of Milan in the night, giving him no less than seven wounds, four of which were quite through the body; and then gave it out, as was agreed before, that he was murdered by some Spaniards of the viceroy's guard. The villains having done their hellish work repaired to Valerio for the remainder of their hire, who paid them the other hundred ducatoons, and so they provided, as well as they could, for their safety.

Whilst all the rest of Milan lamented this untimely end of Baretano, Capello and Castiana could not help secretly rejoicing at it, assuring themselves, that now Albemare should have nothing to obstruct his being their son-in-law. And for Valerio, he immediately wrote away to his master to let him know the business was finished, which gave no small pleasure and satisfaction to Albemare, who presently acquainted the lady Amelia with the fate of his rival, and she also rejoiced at it, but both agreed that it was best to conceal it for some time from Clara, knowing how greatly she would be affected by it; but hardly were four days expired before her father and mother advertised her of it, by a gentleman, whom they sent express to Modena, to her, the lady Amelia, and Albemare, and who had orders to attend Clara and Albemare back again to Milan. But it is only for lovers to conceive, or express, with what excess of grief, and immoderate sorrow, our poor Clara received this heart-piercing news of her dear, dear Baretano's mournful end. She rent her cloaths, tore her hair, and twice fell to the ground in a swoon, being no sooner recovered from one fit, but she fell, like one dead, into another. At length opening her cloudy eyes to the enlivening beams of the sun, which, out of love and pity, came to comfort and revive her, she wrung her hands, and looking up toward heaven, with sighs and broken accents called on Baretano, "Oh my love, said she, my Baretano! an angel now in heaven, what is there left on earth worth Clara's care, now you are gone?" then secretly unsheathing a penknife, which she had in her pocket, would that instant have

stabbed herself, if Amelia and Albemare had not by force wrested it from her. They afterwards attended her to the garden to take some air; but she begged Albemare to leave her, and then again a thousand times repeated the name of her dear Baretano, and as often wished that her life might have ransomed his; vowing that although she was a woman, yet, if she knew who were his murderers, she would, with her own hands, revenge his death. Her sorrows were so infinite, and her grief so insupportable, that she could not rest long in one place, but withdrew from the garden to her chamber, whither her aunt Amelia carefully followed her, and staid all night with her to comfort her; but the poor afflicted young lady cared not for any consolation, and only cherished the thoughts of melancholy and despair, and so much was she already grown weary of the world; that, had not her aunt most powerfully prevented her, she had the next morning undoubtedly flung herself into the monastery of St. Clare, and in that retired and obscure life ended her days in Modena; resolving, in true affection to her dear Baretano, never more to see Milan, or her parents that dwelt in it; but being diverted a little from these thoughts by some divines, and some ladies of the city whom her aunt brought to visit her, with much solicitation, in about ten days, she suffered herself to be conveyed home to Milan, where, although she was joyfully received and well entertained by her father and mother, yet she likewise there made another attempt to mow herself up as a spiritual sister in the nunnery of the Annunciation; but here again she was prevented by her parents; but still her melancholy

humour increased so much, that she put on mourning attire, and vowed to wear it a whole year for the sake of her dear and only love. And oftentimes she would steal away when she thought no one observed her into St. Euphemia's church, where he laid buried, and there bedewed with her warm tears his silent tomb. Thus disconsolately lived she long, and hardly seemed to share in any pleasures of life.

But as women are but women, and as time gets the better of all things, in about ten months, what by the incessant importunities of her father and mother, and the continual observance and respect of Albemare, she began to look with a more favourable eye upon him. But then the reflection of his having set upon Baretano, and given him three several wounds at St. Remy, would have destroyed the affection she conceived for him as soon as it began, had not love stepped in, and thus pleaded for him, that if he gave Baretano three wounds, he received five himself, and lost more blood, and all for her sake, which again gave her thoughts such satisfaction, that weighed down and vanquished as well by the power and prayers of her parents, as by the endless sighs, letters, and presents of Albemare, the year being no sooner expired, and her mourning put off, but, to the inexpressible joy of her lover, and the great content of her parents, she consented to be married to Albemare, in a pompous manner, at Milan. But this marriage did not prove so prosperous as they expected; for God, in his all-seeing providence, had decreed to disturb the tranquility of it, and make them taste of the bitter waters of affliction.

Albemare and Clara had not been married much above a year, before his
eager

eager love for her was entirely abated; and being cloyed and surfeited with that beauty which he had so long sought after, and so highly prized, his fancy roved after other women, whose untasted charms he believed would give him fresh delight. He passed now but little time at home with his wife, who began heartily to repent her being called by that name, but rather wished she had been buried in the grave with Baretano: had there been any hopes of reclaiming him, she might have set some bounds to her sorrows; but every day he grew worse and worse, so that the grief and anguish of her soul now shewed themselves, and preyed upon the roses of her cheeks, whilst melancholy and affliction every where attended her footsteps.

The bloody Pedro having spent that money lewdly, which he had got damnable by Albemare, his wants were so great and urgent, that, having played the murderer before, he made no scruple now of acting the thief; so breaking open the shop of a goldsmith, named Fiamata, dwelling in the great square before the Domo, he carried off a small trunk or casket, wherein were some uncut sapphires and emeralds, with some rich pendants for ladies to wear in their ears, and other valuable commodities; but Fiamata laying over his shop, and hearing the noise of one breaking into it, gave the alarm out of his window, and Pedro was soon taken by the watch, with the casket under his arm, and committed to prison. Having no hope of escaping but through the means of Albemare, he sent early in the morning for his man Valerio, whom he bade to tell his master, that being sure to be condemned for this

robbery, if he procured not his pardon, he would no longer charge his soul with the murder of Baretano, but on the ladder reveal who it was that hired himself and Leonardo to perpetrate it.

Valerio reporting this to his master, he was much terrified, and his conscience awakened, he could but think himself in a miserable condition, when no less than his life lay at the mercy of the tongue of so wretched a varlet as Pedro; and knowing it impossible to obtain a pardon for him, he resolved, like the first offenders against the poet's heaven, to heap Offa upon Pelion, and to add murder to murder, and now to poison him in prison to prevent his telling tales on the ladder. So to charm his tongue to silence, and lay his malice asleep, he immediately sent Valerio back to the prison, who bade him fear nothing, for that his master had vowed to get him his pardon, as he should more effectually know before night. Pedro, without doubt, was greatly rejoiced at this, telling Valerio that his master Albemare was the bravest and most generous cavalier in all Lombardy; but to nip his joys in the bud, and disturb the harmony of his false content, that very day he was called down upon his trial, arraigned before the judges, and condemned to be hanged the next morning on a gibbet, purposely to be erected before Fiamata's house, where he committed the robbery. Albemare hearing this, was forced to be speedy in the business he was meditating, and so sending Valerio to him in the prison with a capon, and two flasks of wine to make merry with, informed him that he had obtained his pardon; that it was written out, and wanted only the Viceroy's signet

net to it, which he should have on the morrow by break of day.

One of the flasks of wine that Albemare sent, was mixed up with a strong and deadly poison, but so cunningly tempered, that it carried no unpleasant, but rather an agreeable taste to the palate; and Valerio, who was entrusted with it, proving as true to his master as he was rebellious to God, punctually performed every part of the directions that were given him with it. Having made Pedro twice drunk, first with his good news, and then with his poisoned wine, he took leave of him that night, wishing him good rest, and promising to be with him again early in the morning with his pardon. The prophane wretch, who was never accustomed to any thoughts of a future state, nor reflecting now on the danger he was in, betook himself to his bed, without returning thanks to God, as we may guess, for his supposed deliverance, or taking any resolutions of amending his life, which indeed was to be very short, for he had scarce laid down before the poison began to operate, and in a few hours sent him to another world.

The next morning very early, when the jailor came to his chamber to bid him prepare for his execution, he found him dead and cold in his bed. Such was the miserable end of the bloody and inhuman thief and murderer Pedro! who yet, for example-sake, was hanged one whole day by the heels in his shirt, at the appointed place of execution, his judges believing that he had poisoned himself to escape publick justice. Again did Albemare now rejoice and triumph, to behold how he had avoided the dangerous rock on which he had like to have been

shipwrecked. Nay, he thought himself so secure, that it would be impossible, that either his murdering Baretano, or poisoning Pedro, should be found out: but God, who is the infallible avenger of innocent blood, did not leave him so, but in his justice severely punished him.

It is the fate of wretches who have abandoned themselves to wickedness, that one sin commonly ushers in another, and so likewise do the miseries of a troubled conscience come one upon the neck of another, as well as the misfortunes of those who put not their trust in the Almighty. Thus Albemare was no sooner freed from Pedro in Milan, but he was afresh entangled and assaulted by Leonardo, his other hired murderer at Pavia, who, having there prodigally rioted away his hundred ducatoons, and also run himself much in debt, was, by his creditors, clapped into prison, where, having no other hope or prospect of getting his freedom, he wrote a letter to Albemare at Milan, acquainting him with his sad condition, and begging him, as a means to procure his liberty, that he would lend him fifty ducatoons; but Albemare thinking if he complied with his request he should hear from him very shortly again, and be obliged to be always at his beck (as indeed every one must expect who put themselves in the power of such villains) so throwing his letter in the fire, sent no answer to it; which Leonardo expecting, to no purpose, for fifteen days, he was extremely incensed, and being likewise exasperated by his great indigence, which forced him to sell the cloaths from off his back to feed his belly, so resolving no more to intreat but to touch him to the quick, sent him the following:

LEONARDO

LEONARDO to ALBEMARE.

"IF my first letter prevailed not with
"you for the loan, or call it, if you
"please, the gift of fifty ducatoons, to
"free me from this miserable imprison-
"ment, I make no doubt but this my
"second will; for being a soldier, I give
"you to understand, that I hold it far
"more generous to hang than to starve;
"and if a halter does bring some dis-
"grace, it likewise brings an end to all
"my miseries; so that if you do not
"furnish me with what I require, and
"that speedily, although it cost me my
"life, I will no longer conceal how you
"did hire Pedro and myself, for two
"hundred ducatoons, to give signor Ba-
"rettona his death, which, at your re-
"quest we performed. Think then, how
"near my secrecy concerns your life,
"since, when I suffer death, I know
"you have but a short time to survive
"me: therefore thank yourself if your
"ingratitude turn my affection into
"hatred and revenge.

"LEONARDO."

Now although Leonardo meant not as he wrote, yet his messenger coming to Milan, and not finding Albemare at home, he knew not well what to do, whether to stay for his coming in, or deliver his letter to some one of his servants. But waiting at his door till late at night, and hearing no news of him, he gave it Valerio, and, without telling him from whom or whence it came, prayed him to see it safely delivered to his master, and that he would call the next morning for an answer.

Valerio put the letter in his pocket, against his master's coming home, but being a profligate husband, and very un-

kind to his chaste and virtuous wife, spent the whole night from home, in the company of infamous courtezans. Valerio thinking his return uncertain, and having some business to go about, placed the letter upon a cupboard near his master's study, that it might be in his view at coming home, and so went out.

Here the Christian reader will have much cause to admire at the wonderful decrees of providence, in discovering this letter, and by that means the perpetrators of the bloody tragedy which was so lately acted at Milan! Albemare, as was the custom of many in those days, kept a fool in his house for sport, who was indeed hardly to be matched by any in that city for simplicity. It so happened, that this harmless creature got into the room after Valerio, and saw him put the letter upon the cupboard; and no sooner was he gone out, but the fool, getting a stool, reached it down, and went about the house tossing and dandling it up and down, mightily pleased with his new play-thing. At length his lady, our virtuous Clara, coming in from St. Ambrose's church, where she had been at Vespers, and seeing the letters in the fool's hand, asked him what it was, and where he had it: but he singing and hopping about, still playing with it and tossing it as before, would make no other answer, but "that it was his letter, and "that God sent it, God sent it;" which words he repeated so often, and they made such an impression on her mind, that she could not forbear having a desire to see the contents of it, so snatching it out of the fool's hand, and seeing it directed to her husband, retired into the parlour, and there broke open the seal,

M m

which

which was not what she was wont to do by letters directed to him, but how great was her surprize and affliction, when she found that Albemare was the person who had caused her dear Baretano to be murdered! she flung herself upon her couch, then wringing her hands, and lifting her eyes towards heaven, burst into this mournful exclamation:

“ Shall Clara live to know that Baretano, her first and dearest love, was murdered by the base Albemare? And shall she consent to lie in the same bed with him, who brought that faithful youth to his untimely grave? Shall she prove so ungrateful as not to revenge his death? But why, unfortunate Clara do you talk of revenge, do you not know that Baretano was but your friend, Albemare your husband? The first loved you in hopes of marrying you, but you are married to the second, and therefore ought to love him; and although his ingratitude and infidelity towards you, make him unworthy of your affection, yet consider what are the ties of duty to a husband, whom you have sworn to honour and obey?”

But then reflecting on the foul and crying sin of murder, and how heinous it was in the eyes of the Lord, that the discovery thereof tended to his honour and glory, and that the poor fool was without doubt inspired by heaven to affirm, that “ God sent the letter,” she immediately ordered her coach to be got ready, and went directly to Baretano’s uncle, signor Giovanne Montefiore, and with many sighs and tears shewed the letter to him, who had formerly, though in vain, made strict enquiry after the murderers of his nephew. Montefiore having first read

the letter with tears, and then rejoicing at the discovery, greatly commended Clara for her zeal to God in not concealing so base a murder: and then sending away for the president criminal, who being acquainted with the affair, with great courtesy and equity examined the lady, and then waited upon her home, where he likewise examined the fool concerning the letter, who taking the president by the hand, and jumping along, brought him to the cupboard, and told him, here “ God sent the letter.” Valerio being at this time present, looked on the letter, and said, that he received it from an unknown person, and had put it in the place, where the fool found it, for his master, against he came home: the president being fully satisfied, and admiring the wonderful providence of God, which doth many times raise up the foolish and weak to confound the wise and mighty things of this world, granted his warrant to apprehend Albemare; who, being then found in bed with Mariana, one of the most famous courtezans of Milan, was drawn from his adulterous pleasures to prison, and when charged with hiring Pedro and Leonardo to murder Baretano, he stoutly denied it for a time, but Leonardo’s letter being shewn to him, and he thereupon adjudged to the rack, he made an ample confession, and was condemned to be hanged the next morning at the common place of execution, which occasioned much discourse and admiration in Milan: serjeants were likewise sent away to Pavia to bring Leonardo to the same city, who little expected to have such an answer to his letter.

Albemare now coming to understand in what manner Leonardo’s letter was brought to light, without looking to heaven from whence

whence this vengeance most justly came, cursed the cruelty of his wife, the simplicity of the fool, but above all, most bitterly exclaimed against the remissness of his servant Valerio, in not taking better care of the letter, which was the chief cause of his death, and being so transported with rage against him, he vowed, although he had so short time to live, he would quit scores with him before he died.

The judges, who had most equitably condemned his body, out of christian charity and compassion, that same night sent some very worthy divines to take care of his soul; and these religiously admonished him to confess if he had committed any other flagitious crime, for without that he could not be said to have repented of it. Albemare, having this opportunity, perhaps more out of revenge than any sense of religion, accused his man Valerio with having poisoned Pedro in prison, the night before he was to have been executed, upon which he was also apprehended and imprisoned.

And now this unhappy gentleman, Albemare, was brought to receive the punishment due to his atrocious crimes. And when upon the ladder, before an infinite number of spectators, brought from every part of the city, he owned, that he had hired Pedro and Leonardo to kill Baretano in the street, and seduced his servant Valerio to poison Pedro in prison; for which he was now heartily repentant, and besought the Lord to forgive him; he also asked pardon of Leonardo and Valerio, since he was the cause of their being brought so near their untimely end. He said he heartily forgave the fool, being assured that it was the providence of God which had chosen him for the instrument of discovering his iniquities; and lastly, with many tears in his eyes, he

forgave his wife Clara, whom he affirmed from his heart, was by far too virtuous for so dissolute and vile an husband as he had proved to her.

His judges, seeing that he had added murder to murder, thought it but justice to add likewise to his punishment, and he was no sooner cut down, than they caused his body to be burnt, and his ashes to be thrown in the air.

And now, because the justice of the Lord must needs punish as well the agents as the authors of murder, whilst Albemare was acting this last scene of his tragedy, his wretched hireling Leonardo, and his execrable servant Valerio, were likewise arraigned, found guilty, and condemned to be hanged for their several murders of Baretano and Pedro, and the very same afternoon they were executed.

Leonardo, whose former life and profession had taught him how to sin better than repent, out of a soldier-like bravery, thought to terrify death, rather than let death terrify him; so speaking but few words, bade the executioner do his office.

Valerio next ascended the ladder, who having repentance in his heart, and much grief and sorrow in his countenance, told the spectators, "That being poor and without friends, the hopes of preferment under his master had made him yield to his request in poisoning Pedro; but that he had many times since most heartily grieved to think, that any consideration should make him guilty of so great a crime as murder. He besought all that were present to pray for his soul, and so resigned himself into the hands of his blessed Redeemer."

Such were the miserable ends of these bloody murderers, whose crimes the justice of heaven brought to light, when they thought themselves secure from danger.

GOD'S REVENGE

AGAINST

MURDER and ADULTERY.

HISTORY XIII.

ARGUMENT.

La Vasselay poisons her maid Gratiana, because she is jealous that her husband De Merson, is dishonest with her; whereupon he lives from her; in revenge of which she causes her man Villette to murder him in a wood, and then marries him in requital of his service. Villette, a year after, riding through the same wood, is thrown from his horse, and almost killed; when he confesseth the murder of his master De Merson, and accuseth his wife Le Vasselay, to be the cause of it; for which bloody crime he is hanged, and she burnt alive.

IN the city of Mans, the capital of the province of Main, in France, there dwelt a gentlewoman named La Vasselay, who, at the age of sixty-three, was left very rich by her second husband monsieur Froyset; and who, notwithstanding her age, in a very short time growing weary of a single life, determined to marry again.

Her birth and wealth, rather than her person or virtues, drew many old widowers, and some rich gentlemen and coun-

fellors of the famous presidial court of that city, to make their court to her, but in vain; for if she was not too young for them, they were all too old for her; and although the deep furrows in her face hid the very ruins of any beauty that might have been once there, yet was she fantastical enough to paint her withered cheeks, and, in all the gay attire of a girl, fat up for a young husband.

During the time that La Vasselay, by this ridiculous behaviour, made herself the





the jest of all Mans, a young gentleman of L'Aval, in the province of Main, named De Merfon, came home from his travels in Italy, and other countries, whither his father, monsieur Manfrelle, who was well descended, and very rich, had sent him to compleat his education, with a very handsome allowance, altho' but his second son; but this young spark had profited very little by his travels, for he, neglecting to make any good use of his time, even in learning the language of the country where he was, passed it away only in company of lascivious courtizans, especially in Venice, Rome, and Naples, and for their sakes so far exceeded his father's exhibition, that he returned to France, not loaded with virtues and experience, but with vices and debts, being otherwise ignorant in all things which he ought to know, and knowing only in those things which it would have been happy for him to have been ignorant of: yet, had he set himself off with some of the superficial endowments of dress and phrase, which he thought would pass current among the beau-monde, and especially with the ladies, whose acquaintance and favour were all he fought after. His old father Manfrelle, judiciously observing the prodigal behaviour of his son, was very much grieved thereat, and his grief was greatly increased, when he found that every day brought fresh bills upon him of his extravagant debts, which being larger than he was able, at least willing to pay, he took De Merfon aside, and very sharply rebuked him for his folly and ill conduct, and vowed that he would neither sell nor mortgage his lands to discharge his idle debts; therefore he bade him to take care himself to

satisfy his creditors, for he would not see, much less pay any of them.

This reproof was very shocking to our young gallant, who, instead of making a right use of it, and, by retrenching his expences, and endeavouring to reconcile his father to him, was so very much affronted, that he resolved no longer to bear his checks and frowns, but involving himself in fresh debts with his usurer, Mercer, and taylor, packed up his baggage, and going to Mans, determined to spend the winter there, partly hoping that his father might discharge his debts in the mean time; but more especially to make himself acquainted with some of the rich ladies of that city, in hopes of obtaining a wife that might support him in his prodigality and folly.

Living thus in Mans, the gaiety of his dress and equipage, the freeness of his expences, the vivacity of his conversation, and the comeliness of his person, made him much affected by several of the fair sex, and far the more, as he was known to be the son, though not the eldest, of monsieur Manfrelle, whose quality and fortune no one was ignorant of: and although in a small time the more prudent and sensible ladies discovered that his wit and experience came very far short of his splendid appearance, yet, as there are women in most places who are to be captivated by a gaudy outside, and who prefer a comely person to all the endowments of the mind, he did not want his admirers.

And of this number was the old widow La Vasselay, who having seen De Merfon once at a sermon, and twice afterwards at nuptial feasts, where he displayed all his perfections, having an opportunity, at the

last, not only of shewing his handsome person and fine cloaths, but also his agility in dancing, wherein he greatly excelled, she became so enamoured of him, that nothing in the world appeared so delicious in her eye, and all the world, if she had it, would she have given to have enjoyed his affections.

But doating fool! was this a time, when in the climaterick of fixty-three, to think of a young husband of twenty-five? And with one foot in the grave, to give way to thoughts of lust and concupiscence, who should rather have turned them towards another world: but, alas! thinking of nought but her lovely De Merfon, and though old enough to be his grandmother, she was resolved to shake off all modesty, and to find some means to acquaint him with her passion. To this purpose she knew no fitter agent to employ than one monsieur De Pruneau, an ancient counsellor of the presidial court of Mans, who was the only counsellor of her late husband, and of whose discretion and fidelity she had all the reason in the world to be assured.

Having made her case known to this gentleman, his wisdom and experience suggesting to his thoughts the many troubles and afflictions that might attend so disproportionable a match, like a true friend, and an honest man, he laid before her the sad examples of several who had been brought to ruin and repentance, by matching so unequally; but finding her love to De Merfon so firmly settled, that all the arguments in the world could not dissuade her from her ill-grounded affection, and that she appeared angry when he attempted it, he persisted no longer in what gave her so much un-

easiness to accomplish the affair she had set her heart upon: and going out to pursue that purpose, La Vasselay calling him back again, with a blush in her face, begged him, if De Merfon should be inquisitive about her age, that he would subtract a few years from it, and say, that she was not much above fifty, which De Pruneau, not being able to refrain from smiling, promised her he would: And soon after meeting De Merfon, informed him how much he was obliged to madame La Vasselay, for the great esteem she had for him, acquainting him with the nobility of her descent, the greatness of her estate, and the excellence of her virtues; he told him, if she was turned of fifty, yet she was not so old as lovely and inviting, that she had a greater regard for him than any man, and that he should be glad to accompany him in making her a visit.

De Merfon, having heard before of La Vasselay's great estate, as well as of the truth of her age, liked the first very well, and although he distasted, yet he dissembled the second, thanking monsieur De Pruneau for the trouble he so generously offered to give himself, in going with him to see her; and her for the great honour she did him, promising, that if she would give leave, he would wait upon her the next night to supper.

De Pruneau having received this pleasing answer, returned with it to La Vasselay, who being so transported with joy, that she thought every hour an age, 'till she was blessed with the presence of her young lover, and spared no cost to make the entertainment suitable to the welcome she intended to give him. De Merfon, in the mean time, laughed in his

his sleeve to think of the youthful affections that bloom, like Glaffenbury thorn, in the winter of this old woman's days; but as he found his father would not pay his debts, that his creditors began to be clamorous, and having no other way to satisfy them, he resolved to venture upon her; considering that although she was old and disagreeable herself, yet, that her immense fortune would purchase the favour of such as were both younger and handsomer, and that Mans, as well as other great towns, was sufficiently supplied with kind-hearted females. He likewise reflected with himself, that rich widows were not always so soon found as sought for, nor so soon obtained as found; that if he refused this opportunity he might never have such another; and that the older she was the sooner she might die, and then he should have his liberty again.

Upon all these considerations, making good his promise to De Pruneau, he went with him the next night to sup with La Vasselay, who having purposely decked herself up in all her youthful and gayest apparel, received him with the highest marks of respect and satisfaction. At his first entrance into the room he saluted her, which gave her more pleasure than she was able to conceal, but, and there is no doubt, it was a very diverting scene to observe the smirking airs this weather-beaten hag put on, to charm the gay and youthful object of her intemperate love: when supper came upon table, he could not but see, that she had therein shewn her desire to please, by the variety, the costliness and profusion of the entertain-

ment, but for herself she ate little, feasting her eyes on the florid complexion and manly graces of her dear ravishing guest; and he, though he did not abstain from eating, could not help sending his eyes abroad upon her plate, rich hangings, and other magnificent furniture.

De Pruneau, to give some life to their conversation, told them, that he hoped this meeting would produce effects answerable to both their contents and desires, whereat De Merson could not help blushing, nor La Vasselay refrain from smiling, if the distortions of so hideous a face could be called smiling. The cloth was no sooner taken away, but De Merson kindly and familiarly took his old-new mistress in his arms, as if he had already given her a place in his heart, which with very little persuasion she was made to believe, and so they parted for the first time.

De Merson, although, as we have before observed, was not the wisest man since Solomon, yet was he not so simple to take every thing he heard upon trust, but spent two whole days examining the writings of the widow's jointure, the leases of her lands and houses, and the bonds and notes of debts due to her; and finding that they did not fall short but rather exceeded common report, he was so well satisfied with them, and with the widow, upon their account, that on the third day he went to wait upon her again, and with very little difficulty obtained a promise of marriage, of which he, the next day, advertised his father, who liking the wealth better than the widow, wished him success and happiness. So within eight days
the

they were privately married, which occasioned much discourse, and no little astonishment to the people of Mans, some blaming her indiscretion and levity, in marrying so young a man; others taxing him with folly, in throwing himself away upon so old a woman; but others applauded his judgment for enriching himself with so large an estate, which would not only discharge his debts, but enable him to live suitably to his birth and education; others again presaging, that their great inequality of fortune, and disparity of years, would occasion much discontent and uneasiness between them. Thus every one spoke differently of this preposterous match according as their fancies dictated, but which of all these opinions was best grounded, we shall presently know.

We have seen the consummation of this marriage, youth wedded to age, May to December, and young De Merson to old La Vasselay, and must not be surpris'd if such contrarieties did agree, for De Merson had not been married above two months before he began to repent that ever he was married at all; he saw that he had tied himself to a decrepid, sickly and decayed person, that was never free from cough and rheum; when she had taken off her neck and head attire, and decked herself in her night habiliments, then he was frightened at her flannel cap and waistcoat, taking her withered face for a vizard to fright children; so that instead of embracing her, he dreaded so much as to touch her.

No wonder if De Merson, having this distaste to his wife, rambled elsewhere for his pleasure, nor that she should be

enraged at missing that, which she had purchased so dearly; if after staying with her one night in a week, he wandered abroad the other six, such behaviour could not but occasion jealousy, which made her very inquisitive and prying into his actions; and the more she did so, the more cause she had to be dissatisfied with his conduct, and her own folly, in putting herself in the power of such a man.

La Vasselay had a maid about eighteen years of age, who was a very pretty girl, and with whom she was afraid her husband was more familiar than he ought to be, for which suspicion she had but these two poor reasons: first, she thought her old withered face served as a foil to Gratiana's beauty; the other was, she had once seen him kiss her in the garden in her own presence, when she brought him a handkerchief which his valet had forgot to give him. Though these were but trivial grounds to build her jealousy upon, yet to say the truth, De Merson was secretly in love with Gratiana, and had several times attempted to violate her chastity; but she being as virtuous as fair, was proof against all he could say; and when he began to be more importunate and even rude with her, she told him, "That although she was but a poor man's daughter, yet she thanked God, her parents had so well educated her, and trained her up in such sentiments of religion and virtue, that she would rather die than be a prostitute to any man upon earth, even the greatest monarch:" which chaste answer, and noble resolution, did then so quench the flames of his lascivious and inordinate affection, that henceforth he changed his

his lust into love towards her, and vowed that he would both respect and honour her as a sister.

Now, although they kept this passage secret from La Vasselay, yet, as it is the nature of jealousy not to hearken to any reason, nor approve of any belief but her own, she was confident that he lay with Gratiana oftener than with herself, which she vowed she could not digest, and would no longer endure; to which end, with the most malicious and strange kind of treachery, she pretended kindness to Gratiana, and thinking to allay the heat of her luxurious blood, looking one day stedfastly in her face, she told her, "That she had need to be let blood to prevent a fever;" whereunto the innocent girl very readily consented, although she had never been let blood before; upon which La Vasselay sending for an apothecary, named Reunee, whispered him in the ear, to take at least sixteen ounces of blood from her, for she was strongly inclined to a high fever; but the apothecary, being an honest man, told her, "That taking so great a quantity of blood from her might endanger her life;" but she replied, "It was so ordered by the doctor." Whereupon opening a vein in her right arm, and having drawn near the quantity of blood he was ordered from the innocent young woman, she twice fainted away in the chair between them; and though they had much ado to bring her to herself, yet the old hard-hearted hag still cried out, "There was not blood enough;" but the apothecary would not be prevailed upon to take away any more, and having bound up her arm, departed.

Gratiana was so far from dreaming of her mistress's jealousy, or of this treachery in letting her blood, that she thanked her for her affection and care of her health: and now the very next day De Merfon dining at home with his old wife, which he had not done for many days before, and seeing Gratiana look so pale, asked her, if she was not well, and then questioned his wife, what ailed her maid to look so, which she seemed to put off with a feigned excuse, but at the same time looked upon this care of her husband towards Gratiana, as a full confirmation of their dishonesty; and this was so strongly fixed in her imagination, that she resolved no longer to bear with it, so one day when her husband was gone out to hunt, with several other gentlemen of the city, she called Gratiana alone into her chamber, then bolting the door, with meagre and pale envy in her looks, and implacable hatred in her heart, she charged her with defiling her bed, and called her her husband's strumpet, saying, the hour was now come that she would be revenged on her. Poor Gratiana, both amazed and affrighted at this unexpected charge from her mistress, and, seeing her honour, and, as she thought, her life in danger, after a world of sighs and tears, called her accusers witches and devils, vowing, by her part in heaven, and at the peril of her immortal soul, that she was innocent of the crime whereof she was accused, and that neither in deed or thought, she was ever dishonest or unchaste with any man in the world, much less with her master: but this would not satisfy the incensed La Vasselay, nor would these protestations of Gratiana pass current with her jealousy,

O o

but

but reputing them false and counterfeit, called up two of her women servants, whom she forced, much against their will, to strip the young creature down to her waist, and then bound her hand and foot to the bed-post, afterwards commanding them out of the room, and bolting the door after them, she flew, not like a woman, but rather a fury, on the poor innocent Gratiana, and with great birch-roads, did not only raise wails upon her arms, back and shoulders, but also drew the blood in many places, when she, harmless soul, having no defensive weapons but her tongue and her innocence, cried aloud to heaven for succour; but this infernal hag, as full of malice as jealousy, had no compassion on her, nor could her tears, or the sight of her bloody-fides, appease her fury; till having broke three rods to pieces, and tired both her arms, she told her, "That that was the only way to cool the heat of her lust:" then calling in her two maids, she commanded them to unbind her, and to put on her cloaths, and then she left the room in the same fury with which she came into it.

Gratiana, the better to remedy these insupportable and cruel wrongs, thought it discreet for the present to dissemble her resentment; but soon after, very secretly providing herself with a horse and man, she rode away to La Ferte, and from thence to her father at Nogent le Retrou, where he was superintendant of the prince of Conde's house and castle, in that town, and where the princess-dowager, his mother, took up the greatest part of her sorrowful residence, while he was detained prisoner in the castle of Boys de

Vincennes, near Paris. La Vasselay, when her rage was a little cool, could not help thinking but she had given too much way to it, and was much grieved at the sudden and unexpected departure of Gratiana, which she was afraid her husband, De Mersin, would not be pleased with, and that the other's father, monsieur De Brema, would take it in ill part; and herein she was no way deceived, for De Mersin, having, through threats and promises, drawn from the two maids the truth of his wife's cruel usage of Gratiana, and being justly incensed, told La Vasselay, with indignation in his countenance, that jealousy came from the devil, whose part he affirmed she had been acting upon her innocent maid, than whom a chaste virgin was not in the world; that although she was poor, she was as well descended as herself, and therefore if she did not speedily do her justice, for the injuries committed towards her, he would forthwith leave her, and never more suffer her to be in the same place with him.

This very much alarmed her, and seeing herself in danger of losing her husband's company, for the sake of which she had acted as she had done, so making a virtue of necessity, she feigned herself very sorrowful for the cruelty she had used to her; to make atonement for which, she bought of black taffaty and crimson damask enough for a gown and petticoat, which, with a bracelet of pearl she was wont to wear on her own right arm, she sent as a present to her at Nogent, by La Villeta, a servant of her husband, accompanied with this letter to her father.

LA

LA VASSELAY to DE BREMAY.

"HAVING at length been able to distinguish truth from error, by which I have got the better of my ill-grounded jealousy, I can do no less than acknowledge the wrong I have done your daughter Gratiana, and how sorrowful I am for it, since my husband's vows and oaths have fully cleared her honour and chastity, which my rash folly had attempted to eclipse and disparage; therefore praying her to forgive, and yourself to forget the injury I have done her, I earnestly desire her speedy return with the bearer, and you shall both find, that I have not formerly hated her so much, as henceforth I will love and respect her. I have sent her some small tokens of my affection, and she shall shortly have greater proofs of it. I desire, monsieur De Bremay, that you would rest assured, that as I am now convinced she is as virtuous as she is fair, and every way deserving, that I shall always hold her in my esteem, and as she is now thy daughter by nature, so shall she henceforth be mine by adoption.

"LA VASSELAY."

De Bremay having received this letter, and his daughter Gratiana these kind tokens from her mistress, his choler, and her grief, were soon defaced and blown away, and they being so well satisfied with the acknowledgment she had made of her past abuse, and the professions of her future kindness, that Gratiana consented to return to Mans with La Villette, by whom

her father wrote the following answer to madam La Vasselay's letter:

DE BREMAY to LA VASSELAY.

MADAM,

"YOUR letter by the bearer has given me as much satisfaction as the knowledge of your undeserved cruelty to my daughter Gratiana did grief and indignation; had she been guilty of the crime whereof you suspected her, I would for ever have renounced her for my daughter, and forbid her my sight, for as her virtue is her only portion, had she failed in that, I would have joined you in hating, as much as I now love her, but her tears and oaths hath cleared her innocence, and in her's, that of monsieur De Merson, your husband. So, madam, relying on her own merit, and your professed kindness, and forgetting what is past, I return her by your servant La Villette, hoping, that if you will not affect her as your adopted daughter, yet, that you will tender her as your obedient and observant hand-maid.

"I am,

"madam, &c.

"DE BREMAY."

Gratiana's hopes, and her father's credulity, in La Vasselay's fair promises, having now brought her again to Mans, La Vasselay received and welcomed her with many expressions of love, thereby to please her husband, who indeed so well approved of her return, that he liked his wife the better for procuring it. And now, to appearance, all parties were reconciled and satisfied, as much as if La Vasselay's jealousy

jealousy had never offended her husband, nor her cruelty wronged Gratiana: but we shall not go far to see this calm overtaken by a tempest, and this sunshine surprized with dismal and disastrous showers.

Three months were hardly expired since Gratiana's return to Mans, before La Vasselay's old jealousy, which seemed to be extinguished, blazed forth anew with more rage and violence than ever; she thought herself now so fully convinced of Gratiana's adultery with her husband, that she assumed damnable resolutions against the life of the innocent young woman, and forgetting herself, her soul, and her God, to please her jealousy, and her tutor the devil, she vowed that no respect of reason or religion, no consideration of heaven or hell, should be capable to divert her from her horrid purpose; to which end, providing herself with a strong poison, she watched for an opportunity to administer it, and the very first minute that Gratiana complained of any indisposition, under colour of great care and affection to her, she made some white broth, in which she infused a large potion of it, which, operating according to her cursed design, within six days, after many fainting and languishing fits, made a perpetual separation betwixt her soul and body.

De Merson was no sooner informed of Gratiana's death, but his thoughts suggested to him that his wife, La Vasselay, was the occasion of it, and so had converted her jealousy into murder. Being fixed in this opinion, notwithstanding his wife's outward shew of sorrow upon the occasion, he could not help looking on her as a detestable murderers, which

made her very sight odious to him: on the other hand, considering Gratiana's beauty and chastity, and that she was sent to her untimely grave for his sake, it redoubled his affliction; but being apprehensive that this might confirm his wife's jealousy, and believing at the same time, that the wretch who was capable of so black a murder, would make no scruple in conscience to perpetrate a second, by which his own life might be in danger, upon which he resolved to entirely forsake her; and the better to provide for himself and vex her, he secretly packed up all her bills, bonds, leases, and conveyances, as also all her money, plate, jewels, and richest household furniture, likewise forbidding all his tenants to pay her any rent, allowing her only a bare maintenance, then suddenly taking horse, rode home to his father's, where he resolved chiefly to reside, not allowing the tears or intreaties of his wife to have any power to detain him.

La Vasselay seeing the unkindness of her husband, in making her thus, as it were, a widow again, and also his ingratitude in depriving her of the use of her own estate and effects, and leaving her such a scanty maintenance as was unable to support her in the character of a gentlewoman, that she was almost ready to die with grief. She now repented of her folly and indiscretion in marrying so young a man, and not only accused but condemned her own jealousy, which had induced her to so base a crime as that of murdering her innocent maid, for which this ungrateful departure and ill usage of her husband, she wisely looked upon as but the forerunner of greater punishments, which the divine vengeance had ordained for

for her. It was not only grief to her thoughts, but vexation to her very soul, to see herself made the jest of all Mans, every one rather excusing her husband's youth than commiserating her age, and she had the additional misfortune of beholding her friends in prosperity turn their backs upon her in affliction. The only hope she had left to assist and comfort her in these calamities, was by endeavouring to reconcile herself to her husband, which she first attempted by the following letter :

LA VASSELAY to DE MERSON.

“ **S**INCE at your request I both re-
 “ canted my jealousy of you, and
 “ repented of my cruelty to my maid
 “ Gratiana, what have I now done that
 “ should deserve this your ungrateful, and
 “ as I may truly say, heart-killing de-
 “ parture ; for having made a most exact
 “ scrutiny into my thoughts and actions,
 “ they both inform me, that the ferven-
 “ cy of my affection towards you de-
 “ serve not so cruel a requital. If my
 “ age be any way displeasing to your
 “ youth, yet deprive me not of the fel-
 “ city of your sight and presence, where-
 “ in I not only delight but glory ; and
 “ if I am content that you surfeit on my
 “ wealth, do not make me so miserable
 “ as to starve in want of every thing,
 “ but especially of your company. If
 “ any one has given you false impressions
 “ and abused me to you, if your af-
 “ fection will not, I hope your pity will
 “ allow me an opportunity to justify my-
 “ self. Return then, my dear husband,
 “ and whatever faults and errors I have
 “ committed, I will endeavour to atone
 “ for them by my obedience and re-
 “ pentance.

“ LA VASSELAY.”

De Merfon having received this letter from his wife, was so little affected by it, and did so little commiserate the misfortunes she complained of, that he had sometimes thoughts of sending no answer to it at all ; but at last, after eight days, he wrote to her as follows :

DE MERSON to LA VASSELAY.

“ **W**HAT hope can I have of your
 “ affection, when I see that you
 “ are inviolably constant to jealousy ? and
 “ if the scrutiny of your thoughts be as
 “ true as you pretend, yet I fear that this
 “ jealousy is not the greatest but the least
 “ of your crimes. You write to me,
 “ that I give a cruel requital to your
 “ affection ; but, pray God, that thou
 “ hast not given a more sharp and inhu-
 “ man one to Gratiana's service and chas-
 “ tity. Neither is it thy age, but your
 “ imperfections and vices, that are both
 “ displeasing and odious to me, for I can
 “ have some pity to the first, but no-
 “ thing but abhorrence to the latter. If
 “ you have need of a better allowance,
 “ I will grant it you, but as to my pre-
 “ sence, I have many reasons for deny-
 “ ing it. I know none but yourself who
 “ have given me any ill impressions of
 “ your actions, and those are very ill in-
 “ deed. It will be in vain either to hope
 “ or expect my return : and since your
 “ faults are best known to yourself, let
 “ your repentance atone for them to
 “ God, who is only able to judge of the
 “ sincerity of it, but there is nothing can
 “ clear thy guilt to

“ DE MERSON.”

Though this letter brought but little hopes of a reconciliation to La Vasselay,

P p

yet

yet being exceedingly grieved in her present situation, she resolved to make one more trial by a second; and six months being elapsed since De Merson's departure, feigning herself sick she wrote him again to this effect:

LA VASSELAY to DE MERSON.

"ALL the joys of my life being
 " fled with thee, and my sor-
 " rows having ingendered such an ill
 " habit of body, I very much fear my
 " life is drawing to its period; therefore,
 " my dear De Merson, amidst all my
 " misfortunes, allow me this sole com-
 " fort of seeing you once more before I
 " go to my grave, and if I cannot be
 " so happy as to live, at least let me die
 " in your arms. This request I ask as a
 " charity, then think how cruel it will
 " be to deny me; for if you do not like
 " the name of my husband, yet be not
 " offended to remember that I am your
 " wife, and though I am now beseech-
 " ing your return, I never did any
 " thing to deserve your forsaking me
 " as you have; but if you will still be
 " inexorable, these lines shall be witness
 " of my kindness and your cruelty, and
 " how sincerely I have fought to regain
 " your affection, and with how much
 " hard-heartedness you have slighted

" LA VASSELAY."

De Merson read this letter with laugh-
 ter, and having so little regard to her
 intreaties, that if another had sent him
 the news of her death, as she did herself
 of her sickness, it would have been far
 more pleasing to him; but thinking to

touch her to the quick, and save himself
 the trouble of reading any more of her
 letters, he returned her this sharp answer:

DE MERSON to LA VASSELAY.

"IF your life draw near to its period,
 " that also will put an end to your
 " sorrows. My fight can be but a poor
 " satisfaction for you to carry to your
 " grave, since, as a Christian, you should
 " delight to see none but your Saviour;
 " nor be desirous to live in any arms but
 " his. That I am your husband I grant,
 " and that you are my wife I do not
 " deny, but yet I fear your heart knows,
 " though your pen affirms to the con-
 " trary, that I may have more reason
 " for forsaking you, than you have
 " to expect my return. If you would
 " know more of my thoughts, I pray
 " God that Gratiana's blood do not rise
 " in judgment against you; for had you
 " not been so cruel to her, I should never
 " have been so unkind to you, but you
 " might have lived as happy as I fear her
 " death will make you die miserable.

" DE MERSON."

The receipt of this letter caused much
 perturbation in the mind of La Vasselay,
 who now fully perceiving her husband
 had no love for her, but was strongly pos-
 sessed with the apprehension of her having
 poisoned Gratiana, did not know what
 methods he might take to reveal it.
 Whereupon, to secure herself, and war-
 rant the safety of her own life, she soon
 exchanged her love to hatred, which pro-
 duced such bloody designs in her heart,
 that abandoning the fear and grace of
 God,

God, she impiously concluded a match with the devil to murder her husband; and ruminating for some time which way she should be able to accomplish this wicked design, she at last thought no instrument could be so proper as La Villette, his gentleman, who constantly attended him, grounding the opinion she had of this man on the greatness of his heart and ambition, and the weakness of his purse, and judging right that his pride, joined to his poverty, would render him capable of undertaking any villainy: and learning some time after that he was in Mans receiving his master's rents, she sent for him, and, taking him into a private chamber, told him, she sent for him to request his secrecy in an affair which infinitely tended to his own and her welfare; but being not contented with his bare promise, she obliged him to take an oath, that he would never divulge the business to any one, which he consented to; and then, with many sighs and tears, she began a bitter invective against her husband, telling him with how much undeserved indignity and cruelty he had treated her; and, at the same time, made him an offer of a thousand crowns to murder him.

La Villette seeing the greatness of the danger in that of the crime, was not only dissatisfied but amazed at the proposition: for, although he loved gold well, yet he was not willing to purchase it at so dear and damnable a price as that of his master's blood. La Vasselay finding she could not prevail at that time, put him in mind of the oath he had taken to keep the business secret, which he promised again to preserve inviolably, and, like a faithful servant to his master, sought to dissuade

her from entertaining such bloody thoughts. Had La Villette remained in this honest and religious disposition of mind, and continued firm in his resolution not to imbrue his hands in the innocent blood of his master, it would have made him much happier than any reward he could possibly receive for his guilt, but sorry am I to say, we shall find the contrary; for about two months after La Villette being again at Mans, that implacable old hag La Vasselay sent for him a second time, and after other discourse told him, that if he would murder his master, in six days time she would marry him in requital, and live and die his faithful and loving wife. Now, although her first proffer of a thousand crowns could not prevail upon La Villette, yet the many thousands that her estate promised him, made him quite forego his former notions of virtue, and, like a damnable villain, he took an oath to effect her bloody design, and this horrid contract they interchangeably sealed with oaths and kisses; after which hastening away, he impatiently waited for an opportunity to perpetrate the villainy he had undertaken. Nor was the devil long in offering him the means; for having resolved to murder his master as he rode abroad, and De Mersson being soon after invited to a general hunting-match, as he came homewards towards his father's house at L'Aval, the villain riding behind his master in a great wood, near the small village of St. George, discharged his pistol loaded with a brace of balls through his back and reins, which killed him instantly, and brought him off his horse to the ground. La Villette, seeing his master lie weltring in his blood, after having acted the part of a devil, in committing this execrable murder,

murder, now assumed that of a subtil hypocrite to conceal it; so determining to report that they were both assaulted, and his master slain by thieves, to make all circumstances correspond in appearance with this invention, he charged his pistol again with another brace of bullets, and shot through his own hat, then giving himself a cut over his left hand, took his own pistol, with his master's rapier, purse and watch, and threw them into a pond adjoining; after which he tied both his feet together with a cord, which he had provided for the purpose, and slipping his arms very dextrously into another behind his back, in that condition placed himself against a tree, and groaned and cried out vehemently against thieves, and the murderers of his dear master.

Soon after three English gentlemen, coming that way in their road to Paris, very readily made up to his assistance, to whom he related, "That five thieves had assaulted his master and himself; that he fought in their defence as long as his sword held; that his master was killed with a pistol, then robbed, and himself wounded and bound as they saw." The gentlemen were much concerned at his pitiful tale, and at the bloody spectacle before them, and helped to loosen the cords wherewith he was bound, and then made some search about the wood for the supposed thieves and murderers. La Villette thanked them for their charitable assistance, and, with a wonderful shew of sorrow, took care for the speedy and decent conveyance of his master's body to L'Aval, where monsieur Manfrelle, his mournful father, received and buried him with great concern and grief.

In the mean time, the murderous La Villette having given private intelligence to La Vasselay of all that past, she, though greatly rejoiced in her heart, put on mourning, and the outward shew of sorrow; but, to the amazement of every body, in less than six months was married again to her husband's servant La Villette, which occasioned many odd conjectures in the minds of most people, who had heard in what manner the dead body of De Mersin was found, with no one near it but this La Villette; but there being no proof of any thing against them, they were forced to leave the detection of their crimes to the just providence of God, which did shortly bring them to light.

These two execrable wretches La Villette and La Vasselay had not been married above eight months before he was obliged to go over to L'Aval, to monsieur Manfrelle, on account of a law-suit depending between them; and on his way falling into company with two merchants, who were returning from the fair of Chartres, they rode together almost the whole day, till coming into the very wood, and to the spot where he had inhumanly slain his master on that very day twelvemonths, his horse on a sudden started backwards, and would not go on, notwithstanding he spared neither spur nor whip, but rearing up an end upon his hinder feet, came down again to the ground with such force as threw his rider, and almost broke his back. La Villette well remembering the place, and being in extreme pain from his fall, had nothing but the image of De Mersin, and the fear of death before his eyes, which so operated on his mind, that he confessed to the two merchants the murder,

murder of his master at the instigation of his wife La Vasselay, who would have first seduced him by a bribe of a thousand crowns, which he refused, but afterwards drew him into a compliance with her bloody purpose, by a promise of marriage, which he repented from his soul, and beseeched the Lord to have mercy on him.

The honest merchants, amazed at this story, with all the care imaginable conveyed him to an inn in St. George's, where expecting every minute he would die in their hands, they sent away post to advertise the presidial court of Mans of the business, who ordered immediately to have La Villette brought alive or dead before them, where he again confessed the foul murder of his master De Merson, and likewise accused La Vasselay with being the sole instigator thereof: whereupon she was presently apprehended, and imprisoned, but with many tears and asseverations denied the fact; but her judges were too wise to be baffled by such means. Now whilst these two detestable murderers were under examination, De Bremay, who always suspected his daughter Gratiana had not fair play for her life, hearing of La Vasselay's imprisonment, taking post from Nogent to Mans, there accused her also with the murder of his

daughter. The presidial court, upon this double accusation, adjudged La Vasselay to the rack, who, unable to endure the first torture, confessed both the murders, the first by her own hands, and the other at her instigation. The judges hereupon condemned La Villette to be hanged, and La Vasselay to be burnt alive; which sentence was executed the next day, at the common place of execution in Mans, in the presence of an infinite crowd of people, who as much abhorred the enormity of their crimes as they glorified God, who, in his wisdom and justice, thought fit to bring them to this open shame and punishment.

La Villette said very little at the gallows, but that he found himself much mistaken, when he imagined the great reward he had for the murder of his master could quiet his conscience, or screen him from the punishment due to his crime.

La Vasselay shewed many signs of repentance for the murder of Gratiana, and asked De Bremay's pardon for poisoning her, but could hardly be brought to think herself guilty of any crime in murdering her husband, who, she said, had used her so ill. Foolish old woman! to imagine the crime of another could be an excuse for her own.

Q 9

GOD'S

GOD'S REVENGE

AGAINST

MURDER and ADULTERY.

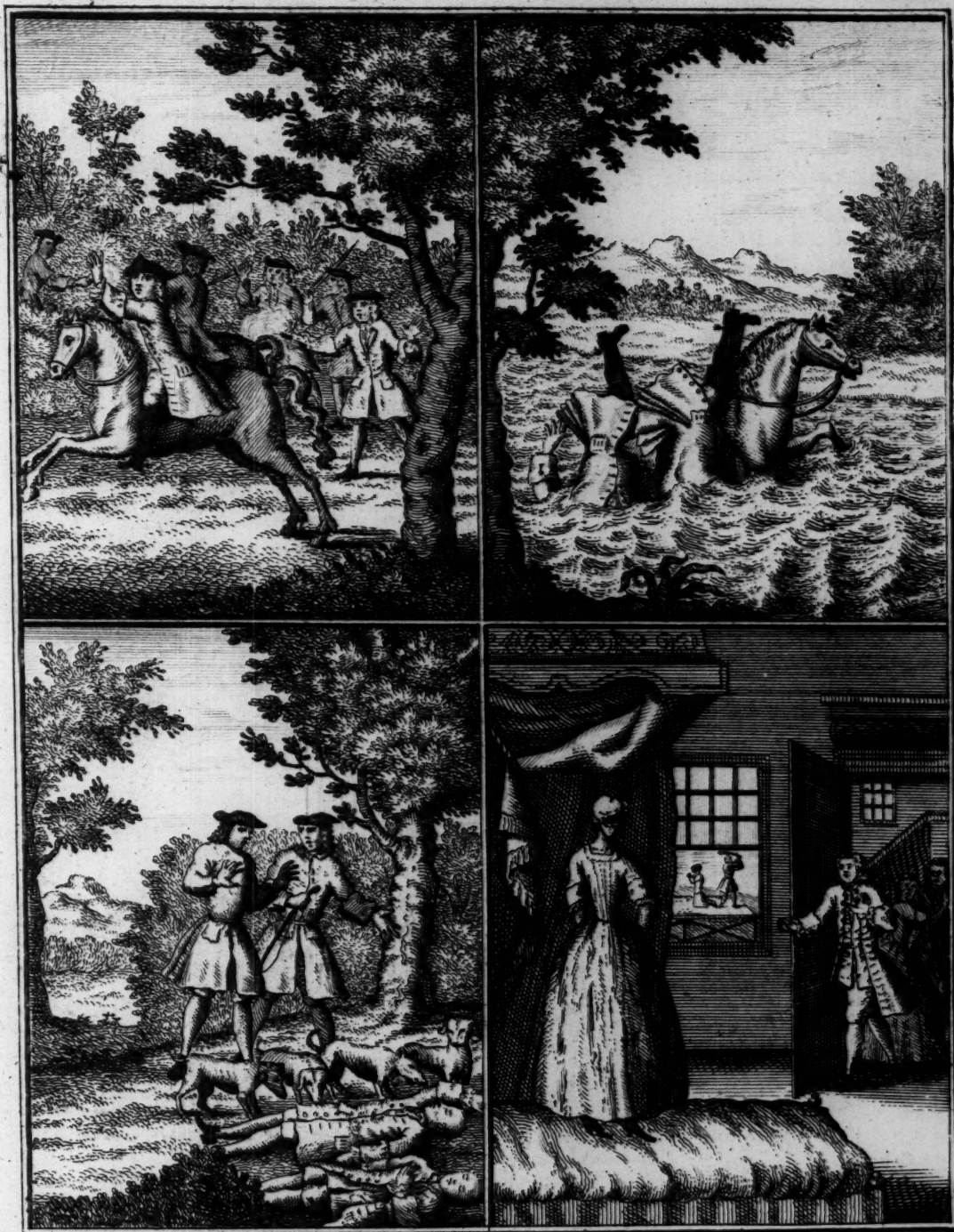
HISTORY XIV.

ARGUMENT.

Fidelia and Cælestina cause Carpi and Monteleon, with their two lackies, Lorenzo and Anselmo, to murder their father, captain Benevente. Monteleon and his lackey are drowned; Fidelia hangs herself; Lorenzo is hanged for a Robbery: on the gallows confesses the murder of Benevente; Carpi hath his right hand, and then his head cut off; Cælestina is beheaded, and her body burnt.

AT the time when the duke D'Ofuna was viceroy of the kingdom of Naples, there dwelt in Otranto, a city of Apulia, in Italy, an ancient and valiant gentleman, called captain Benevente, who, by his deceased lady, niece to the duke of Piombino, had a son named Alcafero, and two daughters, Fidelia and Cælestina, who continued at home with him whilst his son Alcafero lived altogether with the viceroy at Naples.

Captain Benevente was a gentleman much esteemed by all the nobility of Apulia, so that his house was like an academy for all martial exercises, and as the beauty of his two daughters, among so great a resort, could not be long unseen or unadmired, they had many addresses made to them by persons of great worth and quality, but such was the humour of their father, that he constantly crossed all motions of that nature, to the great trouble and discontent of his daughters. But their





their brother Alcafero being returned from Naples, the young ladies acquainted him with their father's severity to them, and desired him to intercede for them; which he did so effectually, that the father told him he had provided two husbands for them, the baron Carpi for Fidelia, and the chevalier Monteleon for Cælestina, and that in fifteen days they would come over to see them; which news was very agreeable when related to his sisters. Accordingly, at the time appointed, these noblemen came, and however graciously they were received by Benevente himself, his daughters treated them only with frowns and disdain, being strangely disappointed in their lovers when they appeared, for Carpi was hunch-backed and squint-eyed, and Monteleon had one leg shorter than the other; notwithstanding which the father told them roundly, they should marry these and no other; and the noblemen, encouraged by him, were very importunate with Fidelia and Cælestina, who were very much dissatisfied with their father's perverseness, thinking he usurped too much upon the freedom of their choice. This, at length, breeding ill blood, they began to hate him, which Fidelia first discovered to her sister in her complaints, that for her part, since her father was so resolute, she had rather see him laid in his grave than be forced to marry the man she could not love. Cælestina declared herself of the same opinion, adding withal, that the sooner he was dispatched out of the way, the better: thus they concluded his death, and as to the manner of it, after many consultations, they thought it most safe to engage Carpi and Monteleon in the execution of their design. To this end they

now changed the scene, and pretended much love to those they mortally hated, which so pleased the two noblemen, that with much urgency they importuned them to marriage, but were told by them, that it was impossible so long as their father lived; for though he seemed to countenance and encourage them in their suit, yet he had given them express commands not to love them, which was the true reason of that slight and disrespect they had all along received from him. The noblemen were taken in the trap, and never considered or dreamed of the treachery of these deceitful and bloody-minded young women, but jointly engaged themselves, in a short time, to remove him who was the mistaken subject of their hatred, and his daughter's disobedience.

Captain Benevente used often, after dinner, to ride in his vineyard, and now and then to a neighbouring village: Carpi and Monteleon took their lackies, Lorenzo and Anselmo, and disguising themselves, set upon him at the corner of a wood, with their swords and pistols, attended only with his servant Fiamenti, and having murdered them both, they carried their dead bodies to an adjacent hill, and threw them down into a deep quarry, full of thick bushes and brambles. Then consulting about their flight, Carpi took post to Naples, and Monteleon, with his lackey, rode to Brundisium; but on the way, Monteleon's horse fell down dead under him, and he was forced to dismount his lackey, and ride his horse, leaving him to follow on foot. At length, near a village called Blanquetelle, he met with a swift ford, passable only for horses, which constrained him to take up his servant Anselmo behind him, but in the midst

midst of the water his horse stumbled, and so violent was the torrent of water, that before they could recover themselves, they were borne down the stream, and both drowned.

By this time Benevente and his man were missing, and nothing could be learned of them. Alcafero, who was now at Naples, being acquainted herewith by his sisters, was very much concerned lest some mischief should have befallen him, promising great rewards to any person that could give any intelligence of him. After five days search, to no purpose, his daughters, with abundance of counterfeited sorrow, pretended to suspect that he was murdered by his servant Fiamenti, who alone went out with him, and had not since been heard of. Alcafero's grief was as real as theirs was feigned, and he left nothing unattempted that might lead to a discovery; but all had hit her to proved in vain, when it happened one day that some gentlemen, who were hunting the stag near Apiata, which being tired with a long pursuit, ran into the quarry among the bushes for shelter, whither the hunters following him, they discovered two dead bodies, which the crows had pitifully mangled, and approaching nearer they knew them by their cloaths to be Benevente and his man Fiamenti, of this they gave notice to Alcafero and his sisters, and the bodies were brought to Otranto in a coach, and interred the same evening with as much decency as the short time would allow, but with floods of tears from Alcafero, and the crocodiles, his sisters. Next day news was brought that Monteleon and his lackey were drowned, which added yet more to the satisfaction of these bloody sisters, who heartily wished that Carpi and his lackey

might meet with the same fate. Six weeks were now past, since the funeral of Benevente, when Alcafero began to think it strange that Carpi came not to condole with him for his father's death, and renew his suit to his sister, which made him entertain some jealous thoughts, tho' he had no probable grounds of suspicion.

About a month after, Carpi, thinking himself out of all danger of being discovered as one of the murderers of Benevente, and that things were ripe for his being received according to his best hopes by Fidelia, he sent over a lacquey to Otranto with the following letter:

CARPI to FIDELIA.

"THERE are some reasons for
" which I have not lately seen
" Otranto, what they are none can better
" imagine than yourself. When your
" sorrows are blown over, I will do my-
" self the pleasure of waiting upon you,
" and hope to be as joyful when blessed
" with your presence, as I think myself
" now miserable in your absence. I
" have given you so true and real a proof
" of my affection, that you cannot in jus-
" tice, ever hereafter doubt of it. I pray
" let me know how your brother stands
" affected towards me, and send an
" answer to this soon, by which you will
" give the greatest satisfaction imagin-
" able to

" CARPI."

The lacquey, as soon as he arrived at Otranto, delivered the letter to Fidelia, and requested her answer, but she was now quite altered from her former resolutions. A deep melancholy had seized her even to despair, she hated all com-
pany,

pany, was afraid of her own shadow, and thought every house would fall upon her head. This made her forsake her devotion, and look pale and ghastly, in which condition, at the importunity of Carpi's lacquey, she returned this answer:

FIDELIA to CARPI.

"MY father's death hath altered my disposition, for I am now wholly addicted to mourning and not to marriage. I pray trouble not yourself to come to Otranto; for the best comfort I can receive is, to know that it is impossible for me to receive any. I never doubted your affection; nor will I give you cause to fear mine, or if this will not suffice, rest assured I have resolved that I will either wed you or my grave. How my brother stands affected to you; is a thing difficult for me to understand or know, since I am not let into his secrets; but I think he neither loves you for my sake; nor myself for yours. May you live as happy as I fear I shall die miserable.

"FIDELIA."

Having sent away this letter, she was again distracted in her thoughts; which disorder her brother and friends endeavoured to remove by good advice; but all in vain, as they were ignorant of the true cause of it. In a word, she grew weary both of the world and her life, and would kiss the hand that would release her from them; having her father's murder always in her mind; which appeared so terrible to her, that she resolved to lay violent hands upon herself, rather than endure the tormenting pains of her evil con-

science; to this end she took poison, but without effect, and afterwards, bolting her chamber door, and tying one of her silk garters to the tester of the bed, there hanged herself.

Dinner being served up, Alcafero and Cælestina called for their sister Fidelia, when one of her servants going to her chamber, brought word that the key was on the outside, and the door bolted within, but no one answered: whereupon Alcafero ordered the door to be broke open, and entering, beheld his sister Fidelia hanging dead at the bedstead, and her body quite black and shocking to behold. The officers of justice being acquainted with this dreadful accident, gave leave to have the corpse privately interred in the garden.

Carpi, in the mean time, having received Fidelia's letter, wondered at the contents, but soon after sent her the following:

CARPI to FIDELIA.

"HAD not your last forbade me to pay those respects due to your merit and my affection, I had seen Otranto before now, on purpose to comfort my Fidelia; though, were matters rightly weighed, I have more reason to grieve than yourself, yet I hope I am far from despairing. Endeavour to love yourself, and not hate me, so shall you draw felicity out of affliction; and I security from danger. Let your second letter give me half so much joy as your first did sorrow, and then I shall rejoice as much as I now lament.

"CARPI."

This letter was brought by Fiesco, one of Carpi's lacquies, who coming to Otranto, as he walked in the court before the house, was spied by Alcafero, who sent to enquire whose servant he was, but he refused to give any account. Alcafero ordered him to be carried down into the cellar, where he was plentifully entertained with wine, and invited to dinner, but would neither by intreaties or menaces be prevailed upon to discover himself. Alcafero told him he saw him there fifteen days before, but Fiesco was silent; he then offered him twenty ducats to disclose himself and his business, this took, and the servant told him he belonged to Carpi, and had a letter from him to Fidelia, which he delivered to Alcafero, and thereby his suspicion of having some hand in his father's death revived; but knowing that silence was one main point to come at such discovery, bade the lacquey stay that night, and he would give him his answer next morning, which was as follows: "Tell the baron Carpi, your master, that my sister, Fidelia, is in another world, and that I resolve shortly to see him at Naples, and in the interim will keep his letter."

Fiesco knowing his fault, never returned to his master; and Alcafero keeping his promise, speeded to Naples, to the criminal judges, and there accused Carpi of Benevente's murder, for which he was apprehended, and condemned to the rack, which torments he endured, and still denied all, so that the court, by a proclamation, cleared him, though Alcafero did not, for after six months, when Carpi was found in his limbs again, by Plantinus he sent him this challenge:

ALCASERO to CARPI.

"Although the law has cleared you
"of my father's murder, yet my
"conscience cannot, and I should be a
"monster of nature not to seek revenge
"for his death who gave me life and
"being; wherefore I request you to meet
"me at eight to-morrow, after supper,
"at the west end of the common vine-
"yard, where I will attend you with
"a couple of rapiers, the choice where-
"of shall be yours; if you will make
"use of a second, he shall not depart
"without meeting one to exchange a
"thrust or two with him.

"ALCASERO."

Upon receipt hereof Carpi was in doubt with himself what to do, but at last bade Plantinus to tell him, "That though he had not deserved his malice, yet he would accept his challenge, but would fight single, being unprovided with a second." The morrow being come, both Carpi and Alcafero met in the field, where it was Carpi's fortune to have the day, by leaving Alcafero speechless, and, as he supposed, dead in the field; but by the great care and skill of his surgeon, he was at last cured of his wounds, and lived to see his father's murder discovered, and the assassins punished.

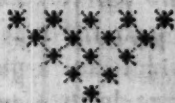
As soon as he was recovered of his wounds, he returned to Otranto, where Cælestina did more triumph for Carpi's freedom, than before she trembled at his imprisonment; so that now being out of fear, she married a noble young gentleman,

man, with whom she had not lived above six weeks, when Lorenzo, Carpi's page, who had his master's pocket at pleasure, to keep secret Benevente's murder, grew debauched, lewd, and dissolute, and being one day sent on an errand by his master, he observed a gentlewoman to pull out a purse, wherein was five and twenty ducatoons in gold, which he stole from her, and being taken in the fact, was the next day convicted, and adjudged to be hanged. Carpi, who was strangely surpris'd to hear this news, went to prison to him, and promised if he would not reveal the business he was concerned in, he would be a faithful and constant friend to his mother and brothers.

Lorenzo promised secrecy, but being brought to the gallows, upon the ladder confessed that he and the baron Carpi, his master, together with Montelon and Anselmo, had murdered Benevente and his man Fiamenti, and threw them into the quarry, the which he took upon his death was true, and so was turned off.

Lorenzo being thus hanged, Carpi was apprehended, and being put to the rack discovered the murder, in every particular as Lorenzo had done, adding withal, that Cælestina and her dead sister Fidelia drew them into it, protesting they never should have done it but at their requests; upon which he was condemned to have his right hand cut off first, and then his head, which being done, Cælestina was seized at a wedding, making merry with her friends, and committed to prison; who understanding the former confessions and executions, confessed the whole, and was condemned to have her head cut off, her body burnt, and her ashes thrown in the air, which the next day was performed accordingly.

Oh wicked and bloody daughters of unhappy Benevente! If murder is a sin of a scarlet dye, how much deeper is that of parricide! as the indispensable duty to our parents is above our common respect to our neighbours.



GOD'S REVENGE

AGAINST

MURDER and ADULTERY.

HISTORY XV.

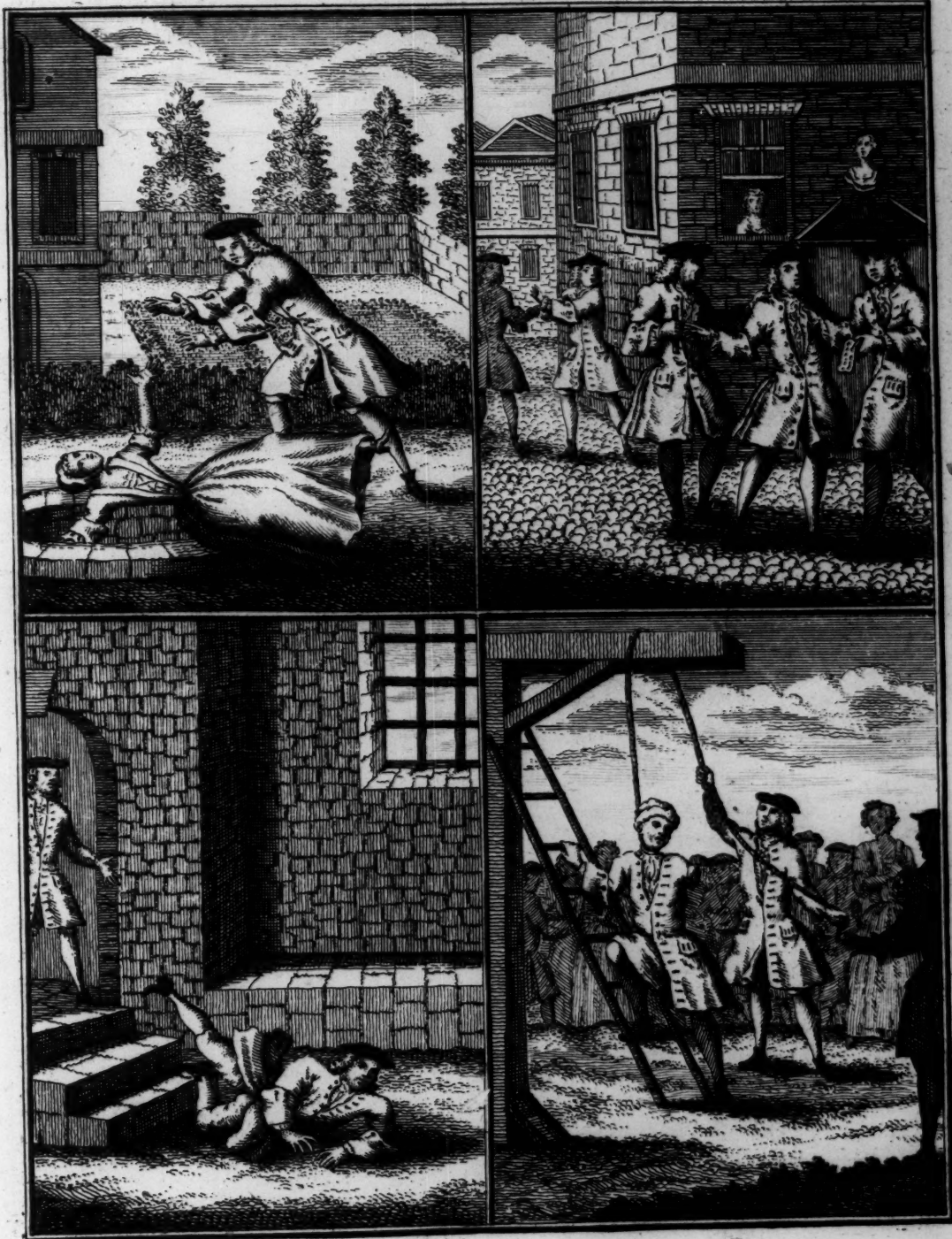
ARGUMENT.

Maurice, like a bloody villain, and damnable son, throws his mother Christina into a well, and draws her; the hand and arm with which he did it cuts off, and being disordered in his senses in prison, he there confesses his foul and unnatural murder, for which he is hanged.

UPON the north-east side of the lake Leman, commonly called the lake of Geneva, there stands a town called Morges, belonging to the jurisdiction of Bern, one of the chief cantons of Switzerland, wherein there dwelt a rich and honest burgo-master, called Martin Halsenorse, who, by his wife Christina Snuytaren, had one only child, a son, named Maurice Halsenorse, and though the father was by profession a soldier, and enrolled as a lieutenant in one of the auxiliary bands of that country,

which were in the French king's pay, yet his chief ambition was to make this son a scholar, and therefore he brought him up at the common grammar school at Morges, where, in three or four years his love and application to study made him so good a proficient, that he was almost as fit to teach his master as to be instructed by him, and was withal so modest, and giving such proofs of early virtue and piety, as made his parents not only think themselves blessed in such a son, but the whole town to love and respect him. However,

the





the father did not long enjoy this comfort; for being one day very jocund, and seemingly in good health, at dinner, he dropt down in an apoplectick fit, and never spoke more.

The death of Halsenorfe the father was the occasion of much grief both to Christiana and her son, not but that he left means sufficient to support them with somewhat more than a bare competency; but he having been always a kind loving husband, her sorrow for the loss of him would have been insupportable, but for the hopes of comfort she had in her son, whose presence, though very dear to her, yet when she remembered what an earnest desire her husband had to see him a scholar, she could not be easy till she sent him from Morges to the university of Lusanne. To which end, having made enquiry for a tutor, and hearing much of Deodatus Varefius, a bachelor of divinity, whom fame, though very falsely, had reported to be an expert scholar, and very holy man, she agreed with him, and allowing her son a reasonable exhibition, and furnishing books and other necessaries, she sent him to the university, charging him, at his departure, to be not only careful of his learning, but of his actions and behaviour, and above all to regard the duties of religion, and an holy life.

Maurice being arrived at Lusanne, found out Varefius, who kindly and courteously received our young scholar; but alas! the hopes of Christiana were extremely deceived in the virtues of her son's tutor, for it would be a difficult matter to determine whether he was more learned or more debauched; and though the dignity of his bachelorship of theology did, for some time, screen him from the censure of the

world; yet his intemperance was such, that it grew apparent to the heads of the college, and, in short, to the whole university. The love of wine, a beastly and pernicious vice, which indeed the Swissers are, for the most part, but too much subject to, had taken such possession of Varefius, that nothing was more incongruous than his doctrine and his life; his profession and his conversation; his theory and his practice: and if the head-springs and fountains are corrupted with this vice, it is no wonder it should spread through the streams and rivulets; if the tutor was tainted, how should the pupil avoid the infection of this beastly crime of drunkenness, which was the devil's usher to all other sins. Therefore, how careful ought the schools and heads of universities to be, in expelling and rooting it out from themselves, and to hate and detest it in others, since a remiss connivance at this vice may be accounted a confirmation of it, and the suffering it to go unpunished is not kindness but cruelty, as we shall shortly see verified in the ensuing mournful history.

Maurice had been hardly three months at the university of Lusanne with Varefius, but his virtues were eclipsed and drowned in vice; nay, he looked upon it as a failing not to be guilty of this his unworthy tutor's loathsome vice of drunkenness, and in a very short time grew so expert, or rather so execrable a scholar, in this beastly art, that he made it day and night both his practice and delight. He who was before so temperate at Morges, that he hardly drank any wine in his water, was now so changed at Lusanne, that he never put any water to his wine; and giving himself to such excessive drinking, that

S f

his

his cups were become his books, carousing all his learning, the tavern his study, and drunkenness the only art he professed, which is surely attended with three dreadful diseases, the poison of our bodies, the consumption of our purses, and the canker of our reputations, to all which our young scholar Maurice had subjected himself within the compass of a year. And the moderate allowance of his mother not answering to his profusion in this senseless vice, he was forced to send so many letters to her under various pretences for money, that she began to suspect that he was become less virtuous and more debauched than when he left Morges; and being assured of this afterwards, by some students and others, from whom she had privately got intelligence of his behaviour, she sent for him home, where, with much bitterness, she taxed him with his drunkenness and prodigality, in that he had vainly spent in one year more than his father or herself could scrape up in many. But see the subtilty of this wretched and hypocritical son! who, seasoning his speeches with his virtue, and his behaviour with obedience and piety, modestly seemed not only to condemn her credulity in listening to what had been said against the integrity and candour of his actions, but also, with a kind of tacit resentment, to malign those who had so unjustly and falsely cast so foul an aspersions on his virtue and innocence; and the better to colour these speeches he put on a shew of such temperance and piety, being found evening and morning at his prayers, and never failing in his attendance on the publick worship, that she began to repent of the sharpness with which she had rebuked him, not only acquitting

him, in her own mind, of every vice, but condemning those who had accused him for their malice and envy. Now, although the better to root himself in his mother's good opinion of his temperance, he, before her, refrained from all liquor, except what seemed merely to suffice nature; yet still the same inclination continuing, as soon as he had stored his purse afresh, he took leave with unfeigned humility and discretion, and, under pretence of perfecting his studies posted to his old debauched companions at Lusanne, who, like pestilent vipers were ready to gnaw out the bottom of his purse, or even prey upon his vitals. Thus this wicked and therefore weak young man, having spent the fragrant summer in folly and prodigality, by wasting the money his mother had given him in wine, now began to feel the frosty winter of that want, which he could better remember than remedy, and sooner repent of than redress.

Having neither virtue, money, nor credit, discretion nor friend, to secure him from the shelves of indigence, or preserve him from those rocks of poverty and misery whereon he had rashly thrown himself, he was reduced first to sell his books, then his cloaths and gown, and lastly his bed, being willing to want any thing rather than wine; and when all was gone, he had no other hopes or refuge, but again to throw himself on the affection and courtesy of his mother, whom he revisited with many letters, which were all petitions for money; but she being now more certainly informed of his dissolute life, and of the sale of his books, gown and bed, answered his letters only with sharp reprehensions, and absolutely refused to contribute any longer to his riotous

ous

ous and ungodly way of abusing his time, and ruining both his body and soul.

Maurice seeing himself wholly abandoned by his mother, knew not how to live, nor which way to turn himself, and in the anxiety and perturbation of his mind, forgetting he was a man or a christian, was so transported beyond the bounds of reason and religion, of nature and grace, that he secretly and most execrably vowed, that he would speedily send her to another world in a bloody coffin if she would not relieve his wants. From this time his thoughts were continually bent on this wicked purpose, and he was the more induced to put it in execution by his being expelled the university for his debauched and shameless life, so that he was now destitute of every support, and that he must either beg or starve, unless he could by some means meet with a supply; therefore leaving Lufanne, he went home on foot to his mother at Morges, hoping that his presence might prevail more upon her than his letters had done.

Being arrived at Morges, his indulgent mother received him with tears, not of joy but of grief, for his debauchery and drunkenness had so emaciated his body, and deformed his face with loathsome rubies and carbuncles, that at first sight she hardly knew him to be her son; and notwithstanding Maurice took much pains to conceal the beastly vice to which he was so much addicted, and to varnish it over with a vain shew of repentance and reformation, yet his mother saw to her affliction, that he loved his cups even better than his life, that as soon as she once turned her back he gave a loose to his brutal intemperance.

Three days were scarce past before he made two requests to her, the one for new cloaths, and the other for money; the first, to shew her affection, she granted him, and, with no less affection, peremptorily denied him the other, because she well knew, that it would be only so much given him to help forward his destruction. This disappointment enraged him so much that he now fully resolved to put the hellish resolution he had formerly taken in execution; he saw he had no money, and knew, at least believed his mother had enough, and therefore concluded, that if she was once dead, he should never more want any. So these two wretched counsellors, avarice and drunkenness pushed him on headlong to perpetrate the unnatural crime of murdering his tender and indulgent mother, the end of which brought him to as much infamy and misery, as the beginning flattered him with false hopes of content and happiness.

This monster in nature being now impatient of delays, and thinking every minute an hour till he had acted the horrid tragedy which the devil had prompted him to, began to ruminate in his mind in what manner he should accomplish his design; one time he thought of cutting her throat in bed; again to poison her at table; at another to kill her as she was walking in the vineyard; or else to hire two watermen to drown her as she was taking the air in a boat on the lake, which she was wont to do twice or thrice every week. He continued still unresolved, till after a week's diabolical consideration with himself, he determined to throw her into an old deep well which was in the outer yard; nor

was

was it long before the devil threw an opportunity in his way, for the good woman being in the garden adjoining to the well, with a prayer book in her hand, the well open, and all the people at the vintage, he ran towards her in great haste, and told her one of the neighbour's children had fallen into the well that instant, which sad spectacle he saw from his chamber window. The charitable old gentlewoman, believing what he said, made all the haste she could to see if it was possible to afford any assistance to the poor infant, but she had no sooner stooped down to look into the well, but he pitched her into it head-foremost, and then clapped down the lid of it; after which, going to her chamber, and breaking open her cupboards, trunks, and chests, he took away most of her money and plate, which he privately hid for his own use, but scattered a few pieces of money and some of her wearing apparel on the floor, that, when an enquiry came to be made, it might look as if thieves had done it; he then went out of the house, leaving the doors open, to the stable, where, taking out a horse, he rode to the people in the vineyard, telling them he had been out all the morning to take the air, and that he was come to spend the remainder of the day with them, and be merry; to which end he sent for wine from the town, and so they caroused, spending their time in jolity and mirth, till towards night, when going all home together, they found the doors open, and no creature in the house, at which they were surprized, and Maurice to all appearance as much as the rest. The servants, some one way and some another, ran to seek their mistress, and he his mother, to no purpose, when some

of the maids going into her chamber, and seeing the chests and trunks broke open, and the things scattered as before related about the floor, they set up a cry of thieves, which brought Maurice and the men-servants thither, who were all greatly concerned, and more for the loss of the good old gentlewoman than for any thing else.

All manner of enquiry being made, and no news being brought of her, this vile hypocrite of a son went and acquainted the bailiff of Morges, and the rest of the criminal officers with the pretended apprehensions he had of his mother's being robbed and murdered. Upon which a private search was made in the town for the thieves, and at the same time every corner of the house was examined into for the body of Christina. The officers remained in the house all night, and in the morning began to search the yards, gardens, and orchards, but to no purpose; but when they had given over all hopes of finding her, behold the wonderful providence of God in discovering this inhuman parricide! A maid, whose name was Hester, having taken a sound nap that morning, dreamed her mistress was thrown into the well, and therefore begged the bailiff and her young master to search there. Maurice, tho' with great difficulty he concealed the confusion this put him into, joined with her in advising that a search might be made there, adding withal, that it was very probable that those thieves who robbed his mother's house might likewise be so devilishly malicious as to murder her, and throw her into the well.

The bailiff hereupon, in the presence of all those in the house, and many neighbours

neighbours called together upon that account, caused the well to be searched, where the hook that was put down taking hold of her cloaths, they instantly drew up the dead body battered and broken in a lamentable manner; at which piteous sight Maurice, the unnatural murderer of his own mother, wept, and to all outward appearance grieved more than any one else. The bailiff carefully examined Hester the maid again, and asked her if God had not revealed in her dream the manner how her mistress was thrown into the well, nor any person concerned in doing it. She answered negatively, and said, "that she had already told all she knew of this mournful business." When Maurice, to shew his forwardness and zeal for the detection of the murderers, pretended that he suspected Hester to be accessory; but the bailiff and council of Morges finding no probable reason to ground such a suspicion upon, dismissed her without farther questioning her, and all concurring in opinion, that the thieves who robbed her had undoubtedly thrown her into the well, they gave leave to Maurice to bury the body, which he did with much funeral pomp, and, that he might take off all suspicion from himself, shed rivulets of tears: but what is this hypocrisy to the foul and execrable sin of murdering his own mother?

Maurice, being now lord and master of all, fell again to his old vice of drunkenness, and was so prodigal among his debauched companions, that in less than three months he was forced to sell his lands, and soon after the greatest part of his plate and household furniture, having run himself greatly in debt, even before he had defrayed the expence of his mo-

ther's funeral; upon which account he was arrested by the mercer and draper, and being abandoned by all his friends, and having nothing left to satisfy his creditors, he was thrown into prison, there to languish in despair, and the terrors of a guilty conscience; he who was lately gorging himself in the richest wines, was now forced to take up with coarse bread and water; he who flaunted it in the face of day, and had the world to range in, was now confined to a stinking dungeon, where, in horror and detestation of his bloody crime, the glorious lamp of heaven, the sun, disdained to send his radiant beams to comfort him: but miserable as he was at present, we shall very shortly see him more so.

Upon Whitsunday, as it was the custom of the place, he petitioned the jailor for that day to have the liberty of the yard, and the freedom of the air, which was granted him; but at night descending the stairs to be pent up again in his obscure dungeon, his foot slipped, and he received a dreadful fall, whereby he broke his right arm, and having no surgeon to look at it, it so mortified, that, for the preservation of his life, within fifteen days he was forced to have it cut off a little below the shoulder. Here let the reader note the wonderful providence of God in destroying that very arm with which this wretch had thrown his mother into the well! But this was not all, the loss of Maurice's arm quite getting the better of his patience, proved the loss of his senses, which occasioned his making such dreadful outcries and howlings, raving night and day in such a violent manner, that he disturbed every one in the prison, and especially the jailor, who acquainted the

common-council of the town hereof, and solicited them to remove him to some more convenient place, which they accordingly agreed to; but when the officers came to remove him from the prison to the hospital, he imagining they were going to carry him to execution for the murder of his mother, cried out, " Well, I have drowned my mother in the well, I have drowned my mother in the well; but God will have me confess it, before he suffers you to hang me:" which words had no sooner escaped him, but he returned to his incoherent ravings again; and it so pleased God that he no sooner entered the hospital, than he recovered his senses again, and in such firm manner as if he had never been disordered. His jailors made report of all this to the magistrates, first of his confessing the murder of his mother, then of the wonderful recovery of his senses, almost as soon as he had made that confession. Whereupon they instantly repaired to him, and there accused him of that inhuman fact, of which his own confession was an evidence against him: but he now denied all, with many oaths and asseverations, and said, he would lose every drop of blood in his body to find out, and bring to justice, the inhuman murderers of his mother.

The magistrates were deaf to his apology, and considering the violence of his madness, and the suddenness of its leaving him, with his own free and unforced confession of drowning his mother, they conceived that God's providence and justice did strongly operate in the detection of this foul and unnatural murder, and therefore, condemning all he could say in his own vindication, they fetched him back again to prison, and there adjudged

him to the rack, where, although his heart and soul were terrified at this sentence, yet the devil was so strong in him, that he determined to deny the fact, and considering it was perpetrated so secretly that all the world could not produce a witness against him, he resolved to out-brave the torture; but this resolution held not long, for at the very sight of the rack, which brought the remembrance of his bloody crime into his mind, he fell a trembling extremely, and then lifting up his eyes and hand to heaven, with a deluge of tears, he again confessed the murder of his mother, for which he was condemned to be hanged the next day. All Morges and Lufanne now rung with this mournful news, and crowds of people were brought from all parts to see the execution of this unnatural parricide. He told the spectators at ascending the ladder, that he detested himself for the foulness of his crime, in giving his mother her death, of whom he had received his own life; and affirmed, that drunkenness was the root, first of his beggary, and that of the horrid crime he had committed, without which his debauched and drunken life alone had made him worthy of death, and begged all that were present to avoid as much as possible that beastly vice. He declared that his mother was too virtuous to go so soon out of the world, and himself too vicious to stay any longer in it. He begged God to be merciful to his soul, and then beseeched the people to pray for him; after which, speaking a few words to himself, and sealing them with many tears and far-fetched sighs, he bade the world farewell, inviting the executioner to do his office, and so was turned off.

G O D ' s

62 A



Hist. XVI.



GOD's REVENGE

AGAINST

MURDER and ADULTERY.

HISTORY XVI.

ARGUMENT.

Idiaques causes his son Don Juan to marry Marfilia, and then commits adultery and incest with her. She makes her father-in-law Idiaques poison his old wife Honoria, and likewise makes her own brother De Perez kill her Chambermaid Mathurina: Don Juan afterwards kills De Perez in a Duel: Marfilia hath her brains beat out by a fall from her horse, and her body is afterwards condemned to be burnt. Idiaques is beheaded, and his body likewise consumed to ashes and thrown in the air.

IN the city of Santarem, which is one of the richest in Portugal, there dwelt a gentleman, nobly descended, and of a large estate, named Don Sebastian Idiaques; he was about fifty-five years of age, and his lady near fifty, called Dona Honoria, which name she well deserved for all sorts of virtues and honours, which made her youth famous, and her age glorious, through all Portugal and Spain. They had lived together in the bonds of matrimony almost thirty years, with

much honour and felicity, and for the proofs of their affection, had had two sons and four daughters. It pleased God to take from them all their daughters and one of their sons, so that they had now one son only, named Don Juan, a gallant young gentleman, twenty-five years of age, of a brave and generous disposition, who, after receiving the first rudiments of his education under his father, was chiefly brought up by the duke of Braganza, who first made him his page, and

and then chief gentleman of his bed-chamber; but when his brother and sisters died, his parents, having no other comfort left, sent for him home to dwell with them, and be as it were the prop of their age.

As for Idiaques, the father, though in all the course of his life he had shewn many moral and generous virtues, which got him the esteem of all that knew him, yet as one discordant string mars the harmony of the best toned instrument, and as one foul vice would eclipse many rich and fair virtues, so this old man, in his latter days, destroyed all the honour he had acquired in his youth, by falling into the odious sin of concupiscence, and soul-destroying adultery, so that he often made himself a false and inconstant husband, that he might prove a true friend to his strumpets and courtezans; at which his wife Honoria being extremely concerned, used many persuasions, prayers, and tears, to divert him from his evil courses, but all were in vain, and he proving rather worse than better thereby, her discretion made her brook his ill usage with as much patience as possible, and therefore seemed not to see or know those things which, to her grief and discontent, she could not be ignorant of: but the following accident increased the misery on all sides.

About six leagues from Santarem there lived a beautiful young widow, of about twenty-two years of age, named Dona Marfilia, well descended, but by her late deceased husband left in no extraordinary circumstances, yet she bared out her port bravely, and maintained herself in such a manner, that she was looked upon as the finest young lady in those parts. Old Idiaques did not want pimps and emissaries

to give him notice of this singular beauty, and was so fired with the report of her charms, that he very soon went over to make his court to her, but she put him off with peremptory refusals, and in modest terms she checked his age for having such lascivious thoughts; but he was as constant in his affection to her, as she was disdainful to him, and his heart was so entangled in the fetters of her fresh and delicate beauty, that he would not forsake her though she refused him. After many pursuits and visits, she at last well perceived, that he was extravagantly in love with her, and so plainly told him, that she would acquaint him with a secret of her heart, and request a favour of him, which if he would grant, as she was almost sure he could, she then vowed she would for ever be at his disposal and command. Idiaques thinking that she would ask for money, or some yearly allowance, promised to grant her request; so she, making good use of her time, first swore him to secrecy, then told him, that if he ever thought to enjoy her, he must contrive some means to marry his son Don Juan to her, and when that was effected, she swore that no one but himself should ever oblige her to defile her husband's bed. Idiaques was strangely surprized, as well he might, at this monstrous proposition, which he found so knotty and intricate, that he was much puzzled, to think what answer to make to it, but being more governed by his lust than by wisdom, he spoke her fair for the present, taking his leave of her in general terms. When he came home he walked pensively in his garden, and there consulting with himself of this business pro and con, he would fain have preserved his son's honour,

nour, and kept his bed unstained; but then Marfilia's youth and beauty had so enflamed his heart, that they bore down all other considerations; he visited her again and again, but still found her constant in her first resolution; all the favour he could gain from her was a few extorted kisses, which so fired his aged heart, that at last like a graceless father, and a vile wretch, he faithfully promised to use his best art and power to procure his son to marry her. To which end he took him aside, and in the softest and sweetest terms he could devise, painted out Marfilia's praises and virtues in the most enchanting colours, adding withal, that although she was not very rich, yet that her person was so exquisite, and her perfections so rare, that she every way merited to be the wife of a prince.

Don Juan too quickly and too fatally relished this proposal of his father, and was the more delighted with it as he had heard the same report of her beauty and excellences in many companies where he had been, and therefore only begged a little time of his father to consider of it; and, in the mean while, rode over with him to visit her at St. Estiene, for that was the name of the place where she dwelt. Don Juan found her beautiful beyond imagination, majestically modest in her carriage, sweet and engaging in her speech, and perfectly well bred, fit baits to ensnare the heart, and betray the judgment of a more solid understanding than that of Don Juan. She acted her part with as much art as love, for the more she made a shew of retiring and concealing her affection from him, the more was he provoked to advance and discover his to her; but he could not be more enamoured of her

beauty, than she was charmed with the great estate to which he was the immediate heir.

Whilst thus the father privately, and the son Don Juan himself was publickly, courting Marfilia for a wife, the old lady Honoria, his mother, for many strong reasons endeavoured to divert him from her. She had all along had notice of her husband's frequent visits to Marfilia, and therefore fearing for the vanity of his age, and the frailty of her youth and chastity, strongly surmised that his familiarity with her was far greater than honour could warrant: upon which foundation she shewed a resolute aversion to the match, and positively forbade her son to proceed therein on her blessing; adding withal, that if he married her, there would infallibly more miseries and calamities attend their nuptials, than as yet it was possibly for him to know or conceive; she prayed him to remember what she said to him now, when he was out of her sight, and to look upon it as the kind and sincere advice of a loving mother to her only child. Don Juan ruminated on these speeches of his mother, as if there was some abstruse mystery or ambiguous oracle couched under them, and as he had as much reason to fear, that this match with Marfilia might prove fatal, as to hope that it might be fortunate, he vowed to proceed therein with great caution, and so forbore to visit her for a month or two. The more the son failed in respect to Marfilia, the more did she slight the father in return, which giving him much uneasiness, he charged the son to tell him from whence this sudden strangeness to Marfilia proceeded, which he answered with a modest excuse, but wholly con-

cealed his mother's advice to him; notwithstanding which the father vehemently suspected that her jealousy was the cause of it.

Marfilia was enraged to see herself deprived of Don Juan, whom, in her ambitious thoughts and wishes she had already made her husband, and however Idiaques, the father, endeavoured to conceal and palliate the business to her, yet she believed it was his fault more than his son's, and laying it to his charge, knitted her brows, and conjured him to tell her, why he had stopped the progress of his son's addresses to her. Old Idiaques assured her, that he had no thoughts of that kind, but that he was very confident the behaviour of his son was owing to the advice of his mother. Marfilia seeing the old dotard so open and plain with her, soothing him up with many kisses and blandishments, told him, that the beldam, his wife, must be first in heaven before he could hope to enjoy her, or she his son upon earth; nay, she went so far as to proffer her service in coming over to visit, and then to poison her. Idiaques opposed this, but, like a wretch devoid of all religion, honour, or humanity, promised to perform it himself, and was very shortly as good as his word; for having procured some very strong poison, he administered it to her in preserved barberries, which he knew she was very fond of, whereof within three days after she died, to the extreme grief of her son Don Juan, who bitterly lamented his mother's hasty and unexpected death; but knew nothing, or had the least suspicion of the cause of it.

His father Idiaques made a counterfeit shew of sorrow and mourning to the world

for the death of his wife; but God in his due time did unmask his hypocrisy, and brought him to his deserved punishment. As soon as Marfilia was advertised of the lady Honoria's death, she was hardly able to contain her joy, and within two months after her burial, she and Idiaques wrought so successfully with Don Juan, that he married her, notwithstanding his mother's advice was still before him, but not of sufficient force to restrain him from doing what proved his destruction in the end.

Don Juan having now brought his lewd wife home to Santarem, to the house of his old lascivious father, where, O horror to relate! he frequently committed incest and adultery with her, but with so much secrecy, that for the first year or two the son had not the least jealousy or suspicion of it. She governed every body, and ordered all things at her pleasure, and what ought to have been her shame became her pride; her incontinency with her father-in-law Idiaques, made her so audacious and impudent, that she commanded not only his house but himself, and proudly domineered over all his servants. In the mean time her own chambermaid, Mathurina, could not help observing the great familiarity between her lady and old Idiaques, of which she having let slip some hints, which were told again to her mistress, she was so incensed thereat, that she most cruelly beat her, and dragged her about the room by the hair of her head; but Marfilia paid dear for her barbarity to Mathurina, who being well born, and having a great deal of pride upon that account, resented these blows and severe Usage of her lady so strongly, that she vowed revenge.

Whereupon

Whereupon she went to Don Juan, her young master, and acquainted him with the base transactions of his wife and father, to the disgrace of nature, and dishonour of himself and family.

Don Juan was extremely surprized at the account of this unnatural crime, and very sorrowful to find himself thus abused by the beauty of his wife, and betrayed by the lust of his father, and holding them both in such abhorrence, he resolved henceforth not to behold their faces, or dwell in the same place where they were; so going to Lisbon, and having there provided himself with money and other things, posted to Spain, and took up his residence at the court of Madrid; where we will leave him for a while, to speak of other affairs that passed at Santarem.

Idiaques and Marfilia were greatly grieved at the sudden departure of Don Juan, being both well assured that he must have some secret Intelligence of their base and unnatural practices, the scandal of which they knew would fall heavy upon them when they came to be known, and that now seemed to be inevitable, since this abrupt departure of Don Juan, without letting them know whither he was gone, or when he would return, were sufficient remarks of his little respect and great displeasure.

Marfilia assuring herself that it was her maid Mathurina who had disclosed her iniquity to her husband Don Juan, grew so furious, that she vowed a bitter revenge; and having provided herself with a bundle of rods, intended the next day to exert her utmost malice in the exercise of them upon her maid, but she had the good fortune to get notice of her

intention, and prevented it by riding over to her father at the town of St. Saviour's, and there from point to point related to him all that passed between her wicked mistress, and, if possible, more wicked father-in-law. Disdaining any longer to serve her, and thinking her tongue at liberty, she made no scruple of publishing to the world the scandalous transactions of Marfilia and old Idiaques; but this indiscretion cost her dear.

Marfilia, hearing from many hands with how much freedom Mathurina spoke of her reputation, thought herself obliged to take some method to stop her mouth, and endeavour to save her reputation; but in a matter of so great concern, she did not choose to rely wholly upon her own judgment, and resolved to take advice of her only brother, Don Alfonso de Perez, and crave his assistance. To him therefore she applied, and affirmed with a thousand oaths and asseverations, that there was no manner of grounds for any suspicion of the guilt with which this vile wretch her maid had accused her, and that it proceeded wholly from her own malicious invention, which had drove her husband from her in discontent, and made her the unhappiest of women, and that she must continue so, if that licentious tongue of hers was not put to silence. Perez had so much confidence in what his sister told him, that he believed all her false Asseverations, and bade her be comforted, for that he would take order to prevent Mathurina's doing her reputation any farther injury by her scandalous tongue.

To make good his promise to his wicked sister, he rode over to St. Saviour's, and privately waiting about her father's door in a dark night, at length

spied

spied her coming out, when, without ceremony or parlying upon the matter, he run her twice through the body with his rapier, upon which she fell dead at his feet. Perez finding he had dispatched her, immediately taking horse hastened away to Santarem, being neither seen or discovered, although Pedro de Castello caused all the enquiry that was possible to be made after the murderer of his daughter.

As soon as Perez came to Santarem, he acquainted his sister Marsilia with what he had done, who was greatly rejoiced thereat; and now she wholly directed her malice and revenge against her husband Don Juan, for the indignity he had put upon her in leaving her as he had done, by which he seemed tacitly to tax her with that crime of which she knew herself to be but too guilty; and having persuaded her bloody brother before of her innocence, she now repeated whatever she had told him to that purpose, and at the same time, by her lascivious kisses and pretended fondness, drew him in to make solemn protestations, that if he could learn where Don Juan was, he would call him to account, and force him to do justice to her injured honour. He had not long taken this resolution, before he was informed by Don Juan himself of the place of his residence, by the two following letters sent to his father and wife:

DON JUAN to IDIAQUES.

“ **W**AS there no other woman in
“ the whole world for you to
“ abuse but Marsilia? and was your faith
“ with God so weak, or the power of
“ the devil so strong over you, that you

“ must make her your strumpet because
“ she was your son's wife? your crimes
“ are so detestable in the eyes of God
“ and man, that, for my own part, I
“ hold you both unworthy of the names
“ of father and wife, and shall never
“ desire to see you more. I have there-
“ left Portugal for Spain, and forsaken
“ Santarem to live and die in Madrid.
“ And when hereafter God shall be so
“ merciful to your soul, as to let you
“ see that the winter of your age is
“ fitter for the grave than the incestuous
“ bed of your son's wife, if you wash
“ not this foul stain away with an ocean
“ of tears, I fear you will become more
“ miserable than you have made

“ *JUAN*”

The Letter to his wife was as follows:

DON JUAN to MARSILIA.

“ **W**HAT devil possessed your
“ heart with so much lust, and
“ your soul with so much impiety, as to
“ make you violate the vow which you
“ gave me in marriage, by committing
“ the damnable sins of adultery and
“ incest with my own natural father? if
“ the consideration that I was your hus-
“ band could not restrain you, methinks
“ the remembrance that he was my fa-
“ ther should have made nature start
“ back with abhorrence of so foul a
“ crime. My affection to you, and my
“ constant respect and obedience to him,
“ have not merited such ill treatment
“ from either of you. Vile and detest-
“ able as you now are, I hold you both
“ unworthy of any future converse, for
“ which reason I have left Portugal, and
“ am

" am determin'd to live and die at Madrid, where I shall continue to make myself as contented as possible under the circumstances to which your vile offences have reduced

" JUAN."

Idiaques and Marsilia having read these letters, were so touched with shame, and stung in conscience at the detection of their guilt, that they could not help blushing at the sight of each other, and most bitterly cursed the name and memory of Mathurina, who was the first author of the discovery. But as falsehood and impudence are but small crimes compared with murder, adultery, and incest, which they had already perpetrated, they resolv'd to deny all they were charged with, and stand upon the justification of their pretended innocence; to which end each sent an answer to Don Juan's letters, the first, from his father, was as follows:

IDIAQUES to DON JUAN.

" **Y**OU deceive yourself, and wrong both me and your wife, in taxing us with the black crimes of adultery and incest, whereof we are innocent, for I have not abus'd her, nor made her my strumpet, although the devil, in the slanderous tongue of Mathurina, has made you believe so. I know the crimes with which you tax me are odious and detestable both to God and man, I thank God, I have more grace than to be guilty of either of them. Sorry am I, that you should so readily give credit to so base an accusation against your own father, and be so prompt in your indignation and dis-

" obedience, as by your sudden departure you have shewn yourself. If your passion had not got the better of all reason, I would leave yourself to judge how much you have wrong'd both your wife and me. Satisfied as I am of my own innocence, I ought to despise your ingratitude, but yet I have such pity for the error you are fallen into, that if with tears and prayers you will ask forgiveness of God, your wife, and myself, mine arms shall be as open as ever to receive you home; and herein you shall make yourself as happy as you falsely and uncharitably think that God will make me miserable.

" IDIAQUES."

The following is the answer of the wife:

MARSILIA to DON JUAN.

" **N**either lust nor the devil hath made me violate my vow given to you in marriage, although without truth or christian charity you have so peremptorily charged me with it; and how shall I hope that your tongue will excuse me of these pretended crimes, such as nature is shocked to name, when, to my astonishment, I find you do likewise condemn your own father to be guilty of them. His age and relation to you, and my youth and virtues might have expected a better opinion of us, than that you should yield so easy faith to such base calumnies and impostures, upon the bare report of a malicious and ill-designing serving-maid, when heaven knows they are as false as your fashness and her revenge made you believe them

X x

" true.

" true. Neither I nor your father have
 " any way blemished your honour, or
 " destroyed your joys, but you have
 " done it yourself, by your too unkind
 " and hasty departure from Santarem to
 " Madrid. The vile author of these re-
 " ports is now in another world, and
 " my heart and soul will testify for me,
 " my affection and constancy is as firm
 " and spotless to you, as your jealousy
 " is false to me, and therefore as you
 " leave my pretended crime, so will I
 " your real ingratitude, to God and time;
 " and yet if you will be so wilfully cruel
 " to live from me, and consequently not
 " to esteem me as your wife, yet as it is
 " my zeal and duty to beg and pray you
 " to return to me, so will I make it a
 " point of conscience still to hold and
 " love you for my husband, and so pre-
 " serving my heart for you, as I do my
 " soul for God, I hope with assurance,
 " and on good grounds, that I shall have
 " no cause to fear either his indignation,
 " or the world's contempt, as I have not
 " merited either the one or the other.

" MARSILIA."

Before these letters were sealed up to
 be sent away, Marsilia shewed them to
 her brother Perez, and with many false
 sighs and tears protested again both their
 innocencies, which he very readily be-
 lieved, and in revenge of her supposed
 wrongs, at first thought of carrying the
 letters himself to Spain, and there fight-
 ing Don Juan; but upon second thoughts
 was of opinion, that it would be more ad-
 visable to see how he behaved upon the
 receipt of them, and then to take his mea-
 sures accordingly: so the letters were de-
 livered to Don Juan's own servant, to be

conveyed to his master, who when he
 perused them, could not help being
 amazed at the astonishing impudence and
 impiety of their contents; and when he
 came to that part of his wife's letter which
 mentioned the death of her maid, he be-
 lieved from his heart that her inveterate
 malice had caused her to be murdered; he
 therefore had once a mind to have taken
 no notice of these letters, and to have an-
 swered them only with silence; but then
 imagining that thereby they might con-
 ceive some hopes of his return, he re-
 solved to let them know how much he dis-
 dained any thoughts of that kind, and,
 without regarding his father, wrote to his
 wife as follows:

DON JUAN to LA MARSILIA.

" THE receipt of your letter has
 " not diminished, but increased
 " and confirmed my suspicions of the un-
 " natural and horrid crimes committed
 " by my father and yourself, and if
 " to the sins of adultery and incest you
 " have added that of murder, which I
 " very much fear, upon the body of your
 " servant Mathurina, though I am igno-
 " rant of the manner in which it hath
 " been perpetrated, yet you may assure
 " yourselves, that the Almighty, who is
 " just in all his decrees, will in his own
 " good time, bring to light to his own
 " glory, and your confusion.

" JUAN."

Marsilia, enraged at the receipt of this
 letter, and finding no hopes left of reco-
 vering her husband, flew again to her
 brother, as to an oracle, intreating him
 to assist her with his best advice, what
 method

method she should take to justify her spotless honour, and make this wicked husband sensible of the baseness and falsehood of his accusation against her. Perez being so much his sister's was no more himself, when making his affection do homage to her beauty, and his judgment and resolution pay tribute to his affection, he desired her to read his heart in his eyes, and promised if she would leave the care and management of this business to him, to give her a very good account of it; so taking leave of her for that time, the next morning, being impatient of all delays, he took aside one Signor Gasper Lopez, a valiant young gentleman, his intimate friend, and relating to him his intent of fighting his brother Don Juan, and the cause thereof, they undertook the journey to Spain together, and arrived at Madrid, where Lopez desired Perez to let him be his second in the duel; but Perez returning him thanks for the offer, told him, he would hazard himself only, and not his friend; but requested him to deliver the challenge, which he had already wrote and sealed up to Don Juan, and bring him his answer. Lopez accordingly waited upon him, and found him much surprized at hearing of Perez's being at Madrid, but much more so when he read the following words:

DE PEREZ to DON JUAN.

" I Have seen your inveterate malice to
 " your wife, my sister, in your false
 " and scandalous letters to her, and Portugal hath read it in your sudden and
 " choleric departure from her: wherefore considering what she is to you,
 " and I to her, I hold myself bound, both

" in honour and blood, to justify her injured reputation, and make her quarrel mine. To which end, I have left Santarem to find you in Madrid, and desire you to meet me to-morrow morning between six and seven, at the west end of the Prado, with your rapier, and without a second, where you shall find me ready to attend your coming, and relying upon the equity of my own cause, and the ingratitude and infamy of your's, I make no doubt but to teach Don Juan what it is for him, without ground or truth, to cast the basest aspersions on the lustre of my sister's honour, whose descent and extraction is as good as your own, and whose virtues and education exalt her far above you. As you are a gentleman you cannot refuse to give the satisfaction required by

" PEREZ."

Don Juan having received and read this challenge of his brother-in-law Perez, knowing the justice of his own cause, and having too much valour to be outbraved by any man breathing, in point of honour, returned him the following answer:

DON JUAN to PEREZ.

" MY hatred to Marfilia, and my
 " departure from her, are justly
 " occasioned by her treachery and infidelity to me; and my letters to her are as true as she is false in denying her wickedness: notwithstanding which, as she is your sister, I cannot but approve your affection to her. I accept your challenge, and, God lending
 " me

"ing me life, I will not fail of meeting
 "you to-morrow morning at your own
 "time and place appointed.

"JUAN."

These two young gentlemen having passed over the night in broken and distracted slumbers, at the first appearance of day leaped from their beds, and posted away to the Prado, where Perez, with his friend Lopez, came first on horseback, and immediately after Don Juan in his coach, with a young gentleman, his friend, named John Richardo de Valdona. The two duellists, disdaining to be tainted with the least shadow of dishonour or cowardice, on sight of each other threw off their doublets, and with their rapiers drawn, without any further ceremony, approached each other.

At their first coming up, Don Juan made a firm thrust at Perez's breast, but he, bearing it up with his rapier, run Don Juan into the cheek towards the right ear, which drew much blood from him, and he run Perez only through the sleeve of his shirt without hurting him; at the second meeting they closed again without hurting each other; but at the third, Perez run Don Juan through the brawn of his left arm, who in exchange gave him a deep wound in his right side, from whence issued much blood. They now paused some time to take breath, having, in the opinion both of Lopez and Valdona, been hitherto equal both in valour and fortune; therefore they earnestly intreated them to desist and put up their rapiers, but they could not be so soon reconciled, for after a little breathing they fell to it again with fresh courage.

At the fourth encounter Perez gave Don Juan a deep wound in his left shoulder, and received one himself in his neck, and although by this time they were covered with blood, yet would they not give over, but seemed as if they were rather resolved to make death fear them than they shew any fear of death; but the next encounter proved more fatal, for while Perez directed a strong thrust at Juan's breast, he bravely and skilfully warding it off, run Perez quite through the body, a little below his right pap, when closing nimbly with him, and pursuing the advantage he had got, he whipt up his heels and nailed him to the ground, where he had not strength to beg his life, nor had the other power to give it him, for this last thrust was so home, that he immediately expired on the spot, without having time to beg forgiveness of God for his wicked life, and to shew mercy upon his sinful soul.

Don Juan, having returned thanks to heaven for his victory, out of his courteous and human disposition, lent Lopez his coach to carry the dead body of his friend into the city, and taking horse in exchange, got privately home to his lodging; but this duel was not managed so secretly, but that within a few hours all Madrid rung of it, and it was the more noticed, as the two combatants were known to be persons of great rank and distinction.

Don Juan the next day caused his brother-in-law to be decently interred, and the next day Lopez waited upon him, to let him know he was returning to Portugal, and asked if he intended to write either to his lady or father at Santarem, to give any account of the fatal encounter between him and Don Perez. Don Juan thanked

thanked him for his courtesy, and wished him a good journey, but told him that he should not send any letters either to his wife or father.

Lopez returning to Santarem, there related the issue of the combat, with the death and burial of Don Perez, adding, that Don Juan was determined not to write to them any more. Idiaques was greatly confounded at this relation, and Marfilia burst forth into bitter tears and lamentations, for seeing her dear and only brother thus slain, she thought she had lost her right arm, and now he was gone she knew not where to have recourse either for counsel, assistance, or consolation. Yet as much as these wretches were shocked at this disastrous accident, they were so far from thinking it a blow from heaven, that they had not grace enough to ask pardon of God, as if they neither deserved nor feared any punishment.

We have in this history seen wicked Idiaques poison his good wife the lady Honoria; and likewise his daughter-in-law Marfilia, incite her brother to murder her maid Mathurina in the street; but we shall not go far before we see the vengeance of God overtaking them for the same; first in the person of Marfilia, who riding from Santarem to Coimbra, to visit a sick gentlewoman who dwelt there, accompanied only by her man Andrea on horseback, and her foot page Piscator running before her; when she came within a league of the town, and had sent her man Andrea forward, there suddenly started up a hare between or close by her horse's legs, which so frightened the beast, that he reared up on a sudden, and throwing her on the ground,

with one of his hind feet kicked her so furiously on the forehead, that he dashed out her brains; God so ordering it that she had not time to say one word, to crave mercy on her soul for the horrid sins of adultery, incest, and murder.

One thing worthy remarking is, that the horse she rode upon was the very same she had lent her brother Perez when he went over to St. Saviour's, to murder her maid Mathurina. Good God, how just and wonderful are thy decrees! and how unfathomable the ways of thy providence!

Piscator, the lady's page, wept extremely at this mournful and tragical death of his mistress, when the next who passed by, and were sorrowful spectators thereof, were two corigadors, or officers of justice, of the city of Coimbra, going that way in their coach to take the air, who compassionating the deplorable death of this unknown young lady, came out of their coach, and having enquired of the sorrowful page who she was, they with much respect and humanity, caused her dead corpse to be decently laid in their coach, which they shut, and mounting their servants horses, returned to Coimbra, from whence they sent her man Andrea with all speed to Santarem, to acquaint his master, her father-in-law Idiaques, with the lamentable death of Marfilia, and to desire him to repair thither to give orders for her funeral.

Andrea was no sooner gone for his master, but these two corigadors considered very profitably for themselves, that the horse that killed her, and all her apparel, and jewels, by custom of the city, and jurisdiction thereof, were fallen to them as deodands, by virtue of their office. They therefore caused her rings,

Y y chains,

chains, and bracelets, to be taken from her, and her pockets to be searched for gold and jewels, wherein they found the last letter which her husband Don Juan had wrote to her from Madrid; at the sight of which, one of the corigadors was for having it read publickly, but the other advised the contrary, so withdrawing to a private chamber, and reading it by themselves, were struck with amazement and horror, when they understood the obscene adultery and incest with which Idiaques, and his daughter-in-law Marfilia, were charged, and which was the cause of her husband Don Juan's leaving her to go into Spain; but when they came to that part of the letter which mentioned the murder of Mathurina her maid, they both concurred in one opinion, that Idiaques and Marfilia were both equally guilty, and that this deplorable death of the lady was a judgment on her for her iniquity; so resolving to seize on Idiaques as soon as he should arrive at Coimbra, they shewed no one the letter, but hushed up the business for the present in their own bosoms. After which they carefully examined Piscator the page, if his dead lady had not some time a waiting maid named Mathurina, to which he answered, yes; and that she was lately murdered in the streets of St. Saviour's, but those who committed the fact were as yet unknown; they then asked whose daughter she was, and was informed that her father's name was Don Pedro de Castello, living in St. Saviour's aforesaid. This being all they wanted to know, having put their servants to watch over the page, that he might not escape to give any inkling of their demands to his old master Idiaques, they presently sent away to St. Saviour's for Castello.

Idiaques that very night arrived at Coimbra, and came to the house of the corigador, where the dead body of his daughter-in-law Marfilia lay, when after having shed whole rivulets of tears over the unhappy object of his sorrow, and he least suspected danger near himself, he was suddenly seized, and committed a close prisoner, without being acquainted with the cause thereof; but his guilty heart and conscience assuring him that it was for poisoning his wife, his thoughts, like so many furies, tortured him all night in the prison, where horror, terror, grief, despair and anguish, did severally act their parts upon his agonizing soul.

The next morning Castello, Mathurina's father, likewise arrived at Coimbra, to whom the corigadors communicated this letter of Don Juan to his wife, sent her from Spain, wherein they told him the murder of his daughter Mathurina seemed probably and strongly to reflect upon Idiaques, and his daughter-in-law Marfilia; they then farther acquainted him with her tragical end, and the imprisonment of Idiaques. Castello said they were certainly the authors, if not the actors of his daughter's execrable murder, and therefore he craved justice of them on Idiaques for the same, which they were as willing to grant as he to ask. In the afternoon they sent for Idiaques to the publick tribunal of justice, there legally and juridically to appear before them, where Castello accused him of the murder of his daughter Mathurina; which charge he did with great boldness deny. Notwithstanding which, the corigadors remembering his son's letter, without regard to his age or quality, adjudged him to the rack, the tortures of which he endured

dured with a resolution and fortitude far beyond what might be expected from one of his years, and loaded with his crimes, which generally make men cowards.

Idiaques being now taken from the rack, thought all danger was over, but he did not so escape, for Castello humbly intreated the corrigadors, that they would allow him eight days more to fortify his accusation, and for that time to keep Idiaques close prisoner, which they consented to. At the expiration of the eight days, Idiaques being brought again before the tribunal, and confronted by Castello, who by this time had recollected some words of his deceased daughter, touching the suspicion of his having poisoned his old lady Honoria, the better to carry on the match between his son and Marfilia, he now accused him of the murder of his wife; which charge did so appal the guilty conscience of Idiaques, that now his courage began to fail him, and fear and shame had made him almost ready to own his guilt, but yet again the hope of life was so sweet, that he endeavoured once more to justify himself by his best eloquence; but one of the corrigadors told him, that though he would not have him wrongfully accused, yet he doubted it would be no easy matter to acquit him of being accessory to one, if not both these murders; that the sudden death of Honoria, and the violent and untimely one of Mathurina, with the voluntary absence of his son Don Juan in Spain, and his killing Don Perez there, and now the fearful and lamentable end of his daughter-in-law Marfilia, whose body was yet unburied, gave a violent suspicion of his life and actions, and of his being guilty at least of adultery and

incest, if not of murder; that his son Don Juan's letter, which he wrote to his wife Marfilia, was a pregnant evidence against him, and that the least of these crimes were sufficient to ruin a greater man than himself, that he could cast no mist before the eyes of the Almighty, though he artificially endeavoured to throw a veil before theirs, that the shedding innocent blood was a crying sin, which in despite of hell itself would call down vengeance on those who were guilty of it, and if so, the best atonement he could now make would be by a ready confession and a sincere repentance; that contrition was the true mark of having a confidence in God, and that to deny our crimes was but an aggravation of them, and therefore he hoped he would not attempt to save his life by the loss of his soul.

Notwithstanding all these pious exhortations, Idiaques was still so much in the power of the devil, that he left no excuse or evasion untried to blind the eyes of these magistrates, and to make his pretended innocence pass current with them; but his eloquence and bold asseverations could not prevail on the solidity of their judgments, which were not to be led away with words, nor seduced or deluded by shadows; so on this second accusation of murder, they again adjudged him to the rack, at the pronouncing of which sentence he seemed so much afflicted and dismayed, that before he was exposed to the torture, his judges, in regard to the age and quality, and of his having once already undergone it, sent two divines to the prison to him, to endeavour to work upon his conscience, and bring him to a confession of his guilt, and God was pleas-

ed

ed to give such efficacy to their persuasions, and power to their exhortations, that at the very sight of the rack, with tears in his eyes, he confessed the poisoning his wife, but at the same time protested that he was innocent of the murder of Mathurina. His judges hereupon pronounced sentence against him, that for expiation of his crime, he should the next morning at eight o'clock, have his head struck off at the common place of execution in the town. But Idiaques, being yet willing to struggle for life, appealed from the judgement and sentence of this court of Coimbra, to that of Santarem, as being a native and inhabitant thereof, and also because the murder was committed there, for which they, not his competent judges, had sentenced him to death.

The corigadors of Coimbra, for the maintenance of the privileges of their court and town, obstinately for a while opposed this proceeding; yet being convinced at last that the smaller towns and courts of Portugal were subject to the jurisdiction of the larger, they were forced to give way, and deliver up Idiaques to be tried again at Santarem; but before he departed the town, the corigadors, by means of the two worthy divines before-mentioned, drew from him the confession of his daughter-in-law Marfilia's being an accessary in the murder of his wife; for that she was acquainted with it beforehand, and had bought the poison that he administered: upon which account they condemned her body to be burnt that afternoon in the market-place, which was done accordingly before a great concourse

of people, who infinitely praised God for his just judgment in the punishment of so execrable a female monster.

Old Idiaques was now arrived at Santarem, where he hoped that the great number of his friends, and his large estate, would do wonders for the preservation of his life; but the inhabitants of this city, who once paid him the highest honours, could now scarce brook his sight, but met him with all the tokens of horror and detestation; and the criminal judges of the court, who reverence and honour justice, confirming the sentence of Coimbra, ordered him the next morning to lose his head, but made this addition to the sentence, that his head and body should be afterwards burnt, and his ashes thrown in the air. Old Idiaques, now disappointed of his hopes, was led disconsolately back to prison, and the next day to the place of execution, which, for the greater example and terror to others, and ignominy to himself, was before his own house, wherein he had acted all his enormous crimes.

The scaffold was no sooner erected, but infinite numbers of people flocked thither from all parts of the city to be spectators of this last scene of his tragedy. He came to the scaffold between two friars, in a suit and gown of black wrought taffata, and a great white set ruff, which was hardly whiter than his broad beard. His comely aspect and demeanor begot as much pity as his beastly crimes raised horror and detestation in the minds of the people, to whom, after having knelt some time in prayer, he made a short speech, and then submitted his head to the ax.





GOD'S REVENGE

AGAINST

MURDER and ADULTERY.

HISTORY XVII.

ARGUMENT.

Harcourt steals away his brother Vimory's wife Mafferina, and keeps her in adultery. She hires Tivoly, an Italian Mountebank, to poison La Precoverte, Harcourt's wife. Harcourt kills his brother Vimory, and then marries his widow Mafferina. Tivoly is hanged for a Robbery, and at his execution accuses Mafferina of hiring him to poison La Precoverte, for which she is likewise hanged. Noel, Harcourt's man, on his death-bed, suspecting his master's murdering his brother Vimory, accuseth him of the same, whereof Harcourt being found guilty, he is broke alive upon the Wheel.

IN the parish of St. Simplician, a mile from the city of Sens, in the duchy of Burgundy, there dwelt an aged gentleman, more noble by birth than rich in the possessions of fortune, who dying, left two sons Vimory and Harcourt. Vimory, the eldest brother, was extremely ambitious and covetous of wealth, who, understanding that a famous counsellor of the parliament of Dijon,

named Bassigni, was dead, and had left a very rich widow, of about forty years of age, called madam Mafferina, he resolved to seek her in marriage: she was short of stature, ill-shaped and corpulent, and had the character of being not so chaste as rich. Harcourt was very averse to this match for his brother, alledging the inequality of their age, her ill-shape, and the ill-begotten wealth of her husband,

Z z

band, who was reckoned a corrupt lawyer, and had raised his fortune, not without the tears and curses of his ruined clients. But all this weighed nothing with Vimory, who preferring her wealth to all other considerations, never rested till he made her his wife: but she took care before-hand to settle her fortune, so that a great part should be at her own disposal both in her life-time, and at her death.

Not long after this marriage of his brother, Harcourt being at another wedding of a cousin-german, at the city of Troyes, in Champaign, he there fell in love with a beautiful young lady named mademoiselle La Precouverte, the daughter of monsieur La Vaquery, an aged gentleman of that city. Harcourt, finding the daughter not averse to his suit, made application to the father for his consent to wed her, who could have no objection to him for a son-in-law, but honestly informed him, that his daughter's chief wealth was in her beauty and her virtues, for that he had not much land, and less money, but that he had a law-suit depending in the parliament of Dijon, which promised him both, and that, if he succeeded, his daughter should not be without a fortune. Harcourt was so much captivated with the charms of La Precouverte, that he was ready to espouse her upon any terms, but first acquainted his brother with his intention, and asked his advice therein.

Vimory informed his brother Harcourt that he knew monsieur La Vaquery of Troyes to be a very poor gentleman, that most of his lands were mortgaged, and never likely to be redeemed; and that his law-suits were very uncertain and expensive. Harcourt extolled the beauty

of La Precouverte; Vimory replied, that beauty soon fades, and that those who prefer it to wealth, are many times forced to feed on repentance instead of content, and that there are few joys to be expected in life while poverty stares a man in the face. Harcourt having settled his affection on La Precouverte, rejected this good counsel of his brother, and shortly married her; but being soon sated with that beauty which he had before set so high a value upon, he abandoned himself to all manner of vice, abusing, and without the least cause, very frequently quarrelling with his fair and inoffensive wife, than whom the whole province of Burgandy had not a more beautiful or virtuous woman.

She was tall of stature and slender, with bright flaxen hair, a lively eye, clear complexion, and a modest countenance; her disposition was sweet, and her behaviour courteous to all the world; besides which she was exceeding devout and religious towards God, and although she had been sought for in marriage by many gentlemen, every way superior to Harcourt, yet she could fancy none so much as himself for a husband. Never was a woman more careful or desirous to please a husband, and therefore the greater was her grief to be so ill-treated as she was, and the greater his inhumanity. She endeavoured in the mildest and most gentle manner to reclaim him from the sins of drunkenness, swearing, gaming, and adultery, for no less in quality or number were the sins which she saw him every day guilty of; but all she could say was to no purpose, nor would he listen to her sighs and tears, which she shed many times at bed and board, and sometimes on

on her knees; still with a wretched violence and thoughtless impetuosity he went on in his vicious courses, neither regarding his health or estate, but sottishly neglected the first, and prodigally wasted the latter. His disconsolate wife often requested Vimory his brother, and La Lacquery her father, to endeavour to dissuade him from those enormities, which threatened both himself and her with utter ruin. All they could say was to as little purpose as her own sighs and intreaties had been before, and giving no limits to his prodigality, he began to sell his lands by peace-meal, rioting with lewd companions, and laughing at the good advice of his best friends.

At the same time it happened, that La Vacquery, his wife's father, lost both his law-suits that were before the parliament of Dijon, whereby he not only lost all prospect of ever obtaining the lands in dispute, but was likewise saddled with such expences as he was unable to pay. Harcourt upon this account was more cruel to his wife than ever, called her beggar's brat, and at every turn threatened to send her home to starve with her father; nor was he long in a better condition himself, for in less than three years from the time of his marriage, he had very near spent all his real and personal estate, to his own shame, the scorn of his enemies, the pity of his friends, and the extremest grief of his unfortunate wife, whose sorrows were so infinite, that her roseate complexion was grown pale and wan, her once sparkling eyes obscure and dim, and her whole frame of mind and body so disordered, that she fell into a painful and lingering illness, without any one to comfort her, daily wishing her

misery and her life might end together.

Her dissolute and merciless husband was now forced to cringe to poverty, because he would not keep friendship with frugality: his wealth was wasted, his lands sold, himself forsaken of his friends, his reputation lost, his debts large, his creditors many and clamorous, so that he knew not which way to look, or how to turn himself to find out some remedy for all these evils; when at length his necessities, and the devil together, suggested this unnatural expedient to him:

He knew his brother's wife Masserina was rich and wanton, therefore he resolved to become so unfaithful to his own wife, and so treacherous and ungrateful to his brother, as to attempt to draw her affection from him, flattering himself with certain hopes of success, on account of his being seven years younger than his brother, and as he thought every way more agreeable to the fairer sex; so taking the advantage of making her a visit, when his brother was rode out to Dijon, and finding her in a very pleasant humour, he broke his mind to her, and was so far from shewing any token of shame, that he gloried in the passion, which he vowed he had for a long time entertained for her; and she, who had more wantonness than grace or religion, received this declaration, which ought to have been shocking to her, with much pleasure and satisfaction: at the first motion told him it was not in her power to deny him any thing, and so striking up a bargain, which they ratified for that time with many protestations, wanton kisses, and amorous dalliances; and it was not long before they found opportunities to consummate this base business, which was but now begun, and

and without regard to truth, modesty, or honour, they not only continued but gloried in each other's polluted embraces.

His pockets were now again filled with coin, which he received from this solacious woman, but a very slender portion fell to the share of his virtuous wife, who was now become so great an eye-sore to him, that providing a very ordinary horse, with a ragged boy, he told her she must go home to Troyes to her father, giving her at the same time a trifling sum, not enough to bear her expences upon the road; but she, who was all goodness and virtue, notwithstanding his cruel usage of her, could not forget the duties of a wife, but throwing herself at his feet, begged she might have the liberty to continue with him in his poverty, as she had done in his better fortune; if she had any way offended him, she asked pardon, and said she would make it the whole study of her life to soften his cares, and alleviate the burden of his misfortunes.

But this alas! was language that could not melt the obdurate heart of one who was so deeply immersed in crimes of the blackest dye; so, without regard to her tears or intreaties, with thunder in his voice, he commanded her out of his presence for ever, not affording her one kiss or one kind word at parting. The poor disconsolate young creature, with her eyes drowned in tears, and her heart ready to burst with sighs, was therefore forced to take up with the sorry equipage this inhuman husband had provided for her, and to make the best of her way to Troyes to her father, who, poor gentleman, was scarce able to maintain himself, and that she might have no assistance from the charity or commiseration of any other, her

husband maliciously contrived to send her suddenly away, when his brother Vimory, and his wife, were at a country seat about eight leagues off.

Now did the wicked Harcourt frolick about with his lascivious sister-in-law, the strumpet Masserina, and they were both grown so careless and impudent in their obscene dalliances, that if Vimory, the husband, did not, yet his servants could not help taking notice of them, only he observed an alteration in his brother's fortune, saw that he dressed much better than he was wont, and that he was never without money, he could not think which way he procured it; but let that be as it might, he was pleased to see that it was so. But the graceless Harcourt had not the same affection for him, and we shall see his villainy soon carry him to the highest pitch of treachery and ingratitude towards him; for it was not a little gold could redeem his lands, stop the mouths of his creditors, and make up the breaches of his former prodigalities; but having taken possession of his brother's wife, he thought he ought to take possession also of all her gold, and her whole estate, which, by being master of all her secrets, he knew to be much larger than ever his brother Vimory imagined it to be; so with many high professions of love, and much artificial flattery, he prevailed upon her to consent to fly away with him; to which end, she called in all her money, and, packing up all her plate and jewels, taking the opportunity of her husband's being gone out very early one morning to hawk, privately marched off with this base and treacherous brother.

Vimory was amazed at his return home to find their clandestine departure, and
was

was once thinking to raise the hue and cry, and send after them; but then, to avoid scandal, he thought it best to say but little, and leave the punishment of their crimes to God.

The first place that Harcourt and his lascivious sister-in-law Mafferina flew to for shelter, was the city of Geneva; where they hired two chambers, and lived together, with one servant only, named Noel, who for many years had lived with Harcourt; but as this city was governed with great order and strictness, they were forced to form a plausible story of the reasons for their coming thither, or they had not been permitted to continue in it: he therefore gave out that he was heir to some lands which were lately devolved to him by the death of an uncle, in the duchy of Milan, between Pavia and Alexandria, and that he was going to sell them; in regard, as he falsely alledged, that both himself and gentlewoman were Protestants, that he should leave her there while he went about that business, and was to marry her on his return. This sham passed current in the city for about a month or six weeks, and they were the more readily believed, because they were observed to go frequently to hear the sermons, and attend the publick worship in their churches. But by this time the magistrates began to pry more narrowly into the reason of their stay, upon which Harcourt, who made no scruple of mocking God, and the holy rites of religion, gave out that he now intended to marry the gentlewoman that was with him before he went to the Milanese; which being very agreeable to her, she consented to, and although her husband was alive, would have been married accord-

ingly; but the minister and antients of the church of Geneva, being as regular in their proceedings, and pious in their intentions, as he was loose and prophane in all his, questioned and required him to shew some authentick certificate from that protestant church or churches in Poitou, where they averred they formerly dwelt, which might prove them to be Protestants by religion, and that their marriage was no way dishonourable, or clandestine, affirming to him that it was against the rules of their religion, the constitutions of their church, and the laws of their city, to act otherwise.

Harcourt now perceived that he had been too short in his arithmetick, and having no such certificate to shew, framed some excuse to gain a little time, and then acquainted Mafferina with what had happened; she was as much afflicted as himself to have their hopes thus nipt, for she was extremely desirous of being married to him: but they now perceived they could not accomplish their design at Geneva, nor would they have been suffered to abide there much longer, if an accident had not happened which hastened their departure.

It was the pleasure and mercy of God, that Noel, Harcourt's man, was not a little grieved in his heart to see his master guilty of this foul and treacherous crime of stealing away his brother's wife, and using her as his own. He knew how infinitely this their adultery must be displeasing to God, and odious to men, and being troubled in his conscience thereat, he resolved no longer to follow and attend upon them, being assured that the divine vengeance would not permit them to be long undetected, nor go unpunished. Then calling

to remembrance the chastity and other virtues of his sweet young mistress La Precouverte, and comparing them with the base vices and adultery of Masserina, out of duty and respect to the first, and detestation of the latter, he sent La Precouverte secret intelligence of his master's lascivious manner of living with his brother's wife at Geneva, whereof he told her he was sorry to say, he was an eye-witness.

The virtuous La Precouverte was greatly afflicted at this news of her husband's adulterous life, sent many prayers to heaven for his conversion, weeping at the same time for his crimes, and her own misfortunes. She once thought of acquainting her brother Vimory with it, but then fearing that his just choler might exasperate him against her husband, and produce fatal consequences, she resolved to be silent to him; but yet she thought herself obliged by duty, conscience, and affection, to use her best zeal and endeavours to reclaim him from this abominable and damnable course of life. And as her poverty and her weakness would not permit her to go over in person to Geneva, she wrote her sentiments to her husband, and to her wicked sister-in-law Masserina, in the two letters following:

LA PRECOVERTE to HARCOURT.

“ **A**lthough you might have imagined you could conceal your adultery from the eyes of men, you cannot sure be so weak as to believe, that the justice of God will not overtake you as soon in Geneva as in any other part of the world; nor is it possible to fly from his presence. I have examined my thoughts and actions, my

heart and soul, and cannot conceive that I have any way deserved your cruel and ungrateful treatment of me; the extreme necessity you have reduced me to, does not give me more affliction than to hear of the monstrous crimes by which you are daily offending the supreme Being, whose vengeance will certainly fall heavy on you, unless by a speedy contrition you deprecate his wrath, and by a sincere resolution of amending your life, you awaken his mercy towards you. I do assure you, I write not this to vent the spleen of an incensed woman, but in pity to your soul. I do not pursue you with hatred, but with a pious concern for your reputation in this life, and your happiness hereafter. You have my daily prayers, none of my curses. If you will abandon your infamous and debauched sister, and will return home and live with me, who am your chaste and sorrowful wife, my arms and heart shall be as open as ever to receive and forgive you. I will wholly forgive what is past, nor upbraid you with any of my misfortunes, if you will but resolve henceforth to love as much, as without any cause you have lately neglected

“ LA PRECOVERTE.”

LA PRECOVERTE to MASSERINA.

“ **N**O longer sister, but lewd and detestable strumpet, was it not enough for you to abuse your own husband, but you must likewise bereave me of mine, who is his own and only brother? As if a single sin could not content your lascivious and inordinate desires,
“ fires,

“ fires, but you must be guilty of this
 “ double adultery, and so foul an adultery
 “ as comes very near incest. If you listen
 “ at all to the dictates of conscience, that
 “ will inform you, that you shall be here-
 “ after as surely miserable, as you now
 “ falsely think yourself happy : wherefore
 “ triumph not to have my grief your
 “ glory, and my affliction your felicity,
 “ for God, who is as just as powerful,
 “ will requite my wrongs, and perhaps,
 “ when you least dream of it, scourge
 “ you for your lascivious pleasures, un-
 “ less by an unfeigned and timely repent-
 “ ance, (which cannot be sincere till you
 “ restore my husband to me) you make
 “ your peace with the Almighty. If I
 “ find that you follow this best and reli-
 “ gious course, I will then again assume
 “ the name of sister, and leave that of
 “ strumpet, nay, I will wholly forget
 “ your wrongs, and endeavour to bury
 “ them in perpetual silence and oblivion.

“ LA PRECOVERTE.”

The messenger being arrived at Geneva, there secretly delivered these two letters to Harcourt and Masserina, who were much surprized and confounded at the contents of them. Harcourt wondered not a little at his wife's boldness in writing as she did, and Masserina was apprehensive that her husband, by not writing at all, was meditating some severe vengeance against her. They were both torn and tortured by many reflections on what might be the consequence of their vile actions, and their being discovered, where they thought they had been secure from all the world. So the better to prevent any danger, they determined to remove from Geneva, but in the mean

time each returned an answer to the letter of La Precoverte, by her own messenger, who was ordered to see Noel as privately as could be, and return him many hearty thanks for the respect and fidelity he had shewn to La Precoverte, who never could forget or leave his kindness unrecompenced. Harcourt's letter to his wife was in these terms :

HARCOURT to LA PRECOVERTE.

“ DO not rashly or unjustly tor-
 “ ment yourself with jealousies a-
 “ bout my absence, the cause of which
 “ is not as you conceive on an ill, but a
 “ very laudable design; and I do not
 “ doubt but shortly to give you much sa-
 “ tisfaction in my return home. I have
 “ vowed to accompany my sister-in-law
 “ Masserina to our lady of Loretto, who
 “ is the best saint of the best country in
 “ the world, Italy, and to her shrine are
 “ now setting forwards from this town of
 “ Geneva. And to this holy saint and
 “ blessed lady, her oraisons for her hus-
 “ band, and mine for you, shall be as
 “ replete with pure affection and piety,
 “ as you imagine our souls are polluted
 “ with lust and iniquity. True it is, I
 “ have committed an error in not ac-
 “ quainting you with my departure, but
 “ when I am happy in seeing you again,
 “ I shall easily satisfy you in that point,
 “ and I pray that you would rest assured,
 “ that it was my sister's devotion to God,
 “ and not my having any inordinate af-
 “ fection to her, that was the occasion
 “ of our journey. I accept of your
 “ prayers, and rejoice in your affectionate
 “ resolution of receiving me home with
 “ open heart and arms. My return
 “ shall

" shall be as soon as it conveniently may,
" if not so soon as you require.

" HARCOURT."

Masserina's letter was as follows :

MASSERINA to LA PRECOVERTE.

" MY departure and absence hath
" neither wronged my own hus-
" band, nor abused yours, for it was my
" pure zeal to God, and not any lascivious wantonness, which drew me to
" pay this devotion to the blessed lady
" of Loretto, and it was likewise the
" goodness of your husband that brought
" him to the honourable resolution of
" accompanying me thither; therefore my
" pure soul defies your false charge of
" adultery, nor could I have the assurance to justify myself were I half so
" guilty as you uncharitably believe me
" to be. I am sorry for your grief and
" affliction, and am very far from triumphing in either. I do not pretend
" to be free from sin, but as I hope for
" God's mercy in other respects, so I
" am sure that I have neither incurred
" nor merited his displeasure by this
" action, which you deem so ill. As for
" the scandalous epithet of strumpet,
" which I could not have thought you
" would have used with so little caution,
" as I know I do not deserve it, I can
" make allowance for the transports of
" jealousy, and so shall endeavour to forget it, and do not doubt, that when
" matters are sufficiently cleared up, there
" will no longer be any misunderstanding
" between yourself and

" MASSERINA."

It is not worthy of our observation, or rather detestation, to see with how much audacious hypocrisy these prophane wretches made use of the holy veil of religion, to cloak the blackest and most abominable crimes; nor of their false pretensions of being zealous protestants before the magistrates of Geneva, when by their letters to La Precoverte, they were biggotted papists, and travelling to the lady of Loretto; for heaven knew they were of no religion, but a disgrace to any they profess.

Harcourt and Masserina having dispatched away their sister's messenger, and knowing that Geneva would soon grow too hot for them, packed up their baggage the next day, and privately taking leave of that town, made the best of their way to the famous city of Lyons, which was about twenty-two leagues distant, thinking to secret themselves among the great confluence of people which were brought together by the great trade of that town; and being a frontier of France, they thought if any accident should befall them they could easily escape to Savoy. On their arrival at Lyons, they hired two chambers near the arsenal, where they had not lodged above fifteen days before an accident happened which very much alarmed them.

A gentleman of the city of Thoulouse, named De Blaife, having some days before treacherously killed his brother monsieur De Barry in the highway, as they were travelling together in a quarrel which fell out between them; for the first having debauched and clandestinely stole away his elder brother's wife, there was a private search made in the city of Lyons, and Harcourt and Masserina being strangers, were taken up on suspicion of being the

the persons sought for, and closely confined all night in the prison; but being carried the next morning before the Seneschal and Procurer Fiscal, they were set at liberty on appearance of the friends of the murdered gentleman, and finding them not the persons they were in search after. There was such a conformity of circumstances in this business with their own, that it made a great impression on their minds, and had they been blessed with grace to have made a right use of the accident, it ought to have checked them in the progress of their iniquity, and then they had not become quite so miserable as they did in the end.

As guilt is always accompanied by fear, Harcourt and Masserina, during their stay at Lyons, very seldom went out of their lodgings, and when they did, it was always in disguise. He exceedingly dreaded his brother Vimory's silence and revenge, and she was terribly enraged at her sister's jealousy; but the name of strumpet gave her more compunction of heart, than the crime by which she acquired it, and sunk so deep in her mind, that she vowed, contrary to her expression in her letter, that it should not die away in oblivion, and that nothing should make her forget it. She then took a resolution to get her poisoned if possible, and for that purpose dealt secretly with two apothecaries at different times, offering each a hundred crowns in hand, as many more when the business was effected, and fifty to defray the expences of the journey, without letting them know the name of the person, or the place where she dwelt, till they had given their positive answer.

But as there are good men as well as bad men in all countries, and of all fa-

culties and professions, so these apothecaries proved as honest as she was wicked and blood-thirsty; for one denied her request with disdain and choler, and the other with much charity and Christian compassion, gave her a great deal of wholesome advice, if she had had grace enough to have followed it.

This disappointment did not a little gall her, but still continuing fixed in her bloody design, she made diligent enquiry for another, who might be more willing to put it in execution. At length she was told of an Italian mountebank, named Baptista Tivoli, who had departed Lyons about a fortnight before, and was gone to reside for the spring season at the baths of Pouggès, a mile from the city of Nevers; this fellow had the character of being vain-glorious and prodigal, and withal very necessitous, which all seemed to speak him a fit agent for Masserina's purpose, and she was so much of that opinion, that she could have no rest till she had seen and spoken with him, and that she might have an opportunity of so doing, she pretended to Harcourt that she had a sudden rheumatick pain fallen in her right arm, and therefore was desirous to go to the baths of Pouggès, by Nevers, which she heard were very good for that complaint, telling him she intended to stay there about a fortnight.

Harcourt, believing what she said, approved her design, and intreated her to be particularly careful of her health, and proffered his service to attend her thither; but she thanking him for his care and affection, told him, that his continuing in Lyons would make her journey both the safer and shorter, and so accepted the attendance of the man instead of the

master, which he could have very well dispensed with, for Noel, being thoroughly acquainted with her vile life, despised her so much that he scarce could endure her sight, but however it was his business to obey. Being arrived at Nevers, and impatient of all delay, she, the very next morning, found out Tivoly, and as soon as she saw him she made a pretty good guess, by his countenance, that he was one fit for the business she was about to employ him in; nor did her judgment deceive her, for having broke the matter to him, she found him exceeding tractable, and willing to close with the hellish bargain; so giving him an hundred crowns in hand, and the promise of an hundred more when the business was effected, and fifty to defray the charges of his journey, which he was to undertake in fifteen days at farthest, she named to him the person whose blood was to be the purchase of this reward; she told him her name was La Precouverte, a young woman of about twenty years of age, and daughter of monsieur La Vaquery, a poor gentleman of the city of Troyes in Champagne. This execrable mountebank, now having full instructions, took his leave, bidding her rest assured, that she should have an account of the business to her satisfaction.

The innocent La Precouverte, in the mean time, having received her husband's letter from Geneva, as also that of her sister-in-law Masserina, she knew not at first what to think of them, she saw Masserina's letter promised much zeal and devotion to God, and her husband's much affection to her; but then, remembering his former unkindness, I may very well say cruelty, as also the clandestine manner

of his departure, she thought the first was false, and the other but feigned, therefore conceived she had more reason to despair of their innocence, than to hope for their return; but this was her resolution, that as Harcourt was her husband, she would still love him, and religiously pray for his prosperity, living in his absence pensively and sorrowfully with her father, more like a widow than a wife, she thought her days were miserable, but little did she think how near they were to an end.

The impudent and villainous empirick Tivoly, being now arrived at Troyes, he soon insinuated himself into the company of monsieur La Vaquery; and as it was the vanity of the times, and the weakness and imbecillity of our judgments in most professions, to prefer strangers to our own countrymen, so this honest gentleman hearing this quack utter whole catalogues of physical phrases which he had stolen from Paracelsus and Galen, he believed him to be very learned, and therefore a proper physician to be called in for the cure of his daughter's consumption, which the grief she conceived for her husband's unkind usage of her formerly, and for his absence at present, and infamous life with his sister-in-law Masserina, had thrown her into: so in a most unhappy hour, her father La Vaquery mentioned it to Tivoly, which being an opportunity he gaped for, he freely promised him his best art and skill for her recovery, and the next day went home with him to visit his daughter, whom he found to be weak and pale, which served the better for his turn, and gave him occasion to administer those poisonous drugs, which if he had had the least spark of humanity, the very sight of that

that beautiful and innocent young woman would have been a check to, nor would his heart or conscience have given him leave to cut off so sweet a flower in the very bloom of its perfection. But what hath pity or conscience to do with those who make a trade of murder? Having felt her pulse, and asked her some questions about her illness, he bade her father be of good comfort, for that he did not doubt of her cure, for which he received his fee, as he had done some time before, from the cruel Mafferina, for her murder. He then ordered her some pills, to be taken two at a time, for three mornings together, which indeed were sufficient, for she expired within a few hours after having taken the third dose.

The hellish Tivoly affirmed to her sorrowful father and friends, that her consumption was of that inveterate nature, that all her blood being turned into water, there was no possibility of curing it, for had it been in the power of art, he knew his pills must have done it. This impudent assertion of the quack passed current with the judgment of La Vaquery, who had now lost all the comfort he had in the world, for in the grave of his daughter he buried his heart's chiefest delight.

Within three days after this mournful tragedy was acted, the monster, or rather devil incarnate, Tivoly, having left Troyes, and posted away to Nevers, where he ravished Mafferina's ears with the joyful account of La Precouverte's death and burial, and received the other part of his reward, which, according to her promise, she very readily and willingly paid him.

La Precouverte being thus dispatched, concluded she could have no other to share with her in the heart of dear Harcourt, which she longed to make her husband, and this was one step towards her becoming so lawfully, though she would have been so at any rate. She fancied Nevers a pleasant city, and Pougges a delightful little place to live in, and when the spring was past, and the great concourse of people retired home, much faster than Lyons; nay, she affected it the more, because it was here she first received the agreeable news of La Precouverte's death, which yet for a time she kept concealed within herself; and instead of returning to Lyons, sent her man Noel with a letter to his master, praying him to come over and dwell with her at Nevers, which she assured him was a pleasant place, and therefore was desirous that he would make her and himself happy by his residence there, where she should expect him with the sincerest affection and utmost impatience.

Harcourt, to humour this vile strumpet, flew to her at the first summons; she welcomed him with a thousand kisses, and was extravagant in her joy, assuring him that the baths of Pougges had perfectly cured her of every complaint. They had not lived there above three weeks before Harcourt by some accident became acquainted with the death of his wife, which gave him no manner of concern, but, on the contrary, was as agreeable news to him as it had been to the adulterous Mafferina before.

It was now a compleat year since this wicked couple took their flight together, and as travelling was very expensive,

penfive, they had now run out a large fum of money, and where they depended upon for fupply, they found their affairs were much diftracted, for Vimory, who hated his wife and brother fo exceedingly, that he fcorned to fend after them, found means to revenge himfelf at home, by feizing on his wife's lands, and the remainder of the effects fhe had left behind her, which coming to the ears of Harcourt and Mafferina, they feperately vowed bloody revenge, and were not long before they communicated their thoughts to each other. Mafferina told Harcourt that fhe could not enjoy any comfort in this life till his brother was out of it, and fhe was made his wife; nor, replied Harcourt, can I enjoy any felicity on earth, till Vimory be in heaven; and being thus agreed, they confulted what means to employ to anfwer their end. Mafferina was of opinion, fhe told him, that the fhorteft and fafeft way would be to difpatch Vimory by poifon; bur Harcourt difliked that, as holding it no way fafe in taking away his brother's life to entrufte and hazard his own to the courtefy of a ftranger; at which words Mafferina changed countenance, being confcious of what fhe had lately perpetrated by Tivoly, but as Harcourt had no fufpicion of it, fhe eafily paffed it off with the pretence of a fudden fick qualm.

This bloody-minded couple, after confulting on many other ways, agreed to employ Noel in this tragical affair: to which end, Harcourt foon after proffered him two hundred crowns in hand, and an annuity of forty more, if he would piftol his brother Vimory, as he was walking in the fields; but Noel was too honeft a man, and too good a chriftian, to liften

to any propofal of that kind, fo abfolutely denied his mafter, telling him, that although he was a poor man, yet he would not purchafe all the wealth in the world at fo dear a price as that of innocent blood. His mafter was ftrangely confounded at this refusal, and could not but blufh to have his crimes thus tacitly reproved by the virtue of his fervant, whom he conjured to be fecret, which Noel promifed, but did not fwear to.

Soon after this Harcourt and Mafferina, to approach the nearer to Sens, left Nevers, and very privately, by fmall journies, chiefly by night, came to a place called Mafcon, from whence he refolved to ride over to Sens, and be his brother's executioner with his own hands, with his piftol, or if that fhould fail, with his rapier.

This impious refolution once taken, he refolved nothing fhould diffuade him from it, nor indeed had he any checks, for he was void of humanity, and his confcience was too much feared to admit of any remorse; the frumpet likewise that was with him, acting the part of a devil, was continually infligating him to the horrid crime he had propofed. So leaving Mafcon difguifed with a sham beard, and a mean fuit of apparel, he went to St. Simplician, the feat of his brother, leaving the town of Sens a little on his left hand, and waiting at the end of a wood, a little way from the houfe, where he knew his brother Vimory was accuftomed to walk alone in the evening, as he unfortunately chanced to do at this time; as foon as he faw him, accofting him with his hat in his hand, and with the counterfeit tone of a begging foldier, he requested an alms of him; Vimory thinking

ing him a proper object of his charity, drew forth his purse; and while he was looking for a small piece of silver, Harcourt very softly drawing out his pistol, which was charged with two bullets, let fly at him, and shot him in the trunk of his body, a little under the heart; but least this should not do his business, he run him twice through with his sword, then leaving the breathless corpse reeking in its own gore, with all possible celerity, he, taking his horse, which he had tied to a tree out of sight, galloped away to his new-intended wife Mafferina at Mascon, who greatly triumphed at this pleasing news; but we shall find that God did not permit her joys to be of a long continuance.

This cruel murder of monsieur Vimory, within two hours was known at his house, and all over the parish of St. Simplician, as also in the city of Sens, and the news of it dispersed all over Burgundy, where the murderer was sought after but in vain. Harcourt and Mafferina met with the report of it at Mascon, and held it discreet to conceal themselves a small time longer in that town, till the heat of the enquiry was blown over; but at the end of two months, Harcourt setting the best face he could on his foul deeds, went over to Sens, and from thence to the manor-house of St. Simplician, which now by the death of his brother Vimory without issue, devolved on himself. Harcourt, who had played the devil in murdering his brother, found no difficulty in acting the hypocrite, and making a wonderful shew of sorrow for his death, hanging his house, and dressing himself and all his servants in mourning.

About a month after he sent for his

good sister-in-law Mafferina, who came home to him, and they seemed so absolutely strange to each other at their first meeting, as if they had never seen one another during the long time of their absence. She likewise appeared drowned in tears, and dressed herself in sable weeds for the death of her husband; but God in his own due time pulled off these false masks, and lay open their crimes to the view and detestation of the world; for how close soever they endeavoured to conceal their dishonourable flight with each other, yet it was so well known among the neighbours, that no gentlemen or ladies, who yet knew nothing of the murders they had been guilty of, would deign to visit them or welcome them home; but still they were in hopes that they should in some measure redeem their credit when they were married together: so they sent for their confessor, with two jesuits, and the vicar of the parish, to acquaint them with their resolution, and desired their advice; but these ecclesiasticks affirmed it to be directly opposite to the rules and canons of the holy catholic church, for one brother to marry the widow of another, as also against the written law of God, therefore they endeavoured to dissuade them from their purpose, and utterly refused to consent to the marriage, much more to perform the office, without a dispensation from the pope, or his nuncio, then resident at Paris.

Harcourt and Mafferina caused the pope's nuncio to be dealt with about it, but he absolutely refused to grant any such thing: however, by the help of money, and the friends which that procured them, within three months they obtained

a dispensation from Rome, upon the arrival of which, they were immediately married, which act they thought would wipe off all the scandal of their former adulteries; and now, as in their own vain conceit, they had washed out the stains of their reputation, and as they abounded in wealth, they were resolved to deny themselves no pleasure and delight; but we shall see how short they were in their reckoning.

It is many times the pleasure and providence of God to punish one sin by another, and this we shall see apparent in the case of their bloody and hellish Italian mountebank Tivoly, who repairing to the great fair of Sens, he there inveigled himself into the good opinion of a rich goldsmith's wife of that city, named monsieur de Boys, and being sent for one day to administer some physic to her, he took that opportunity to steal a small casket of jewels and rings, out of a cup-board, the lock of which he cunningly picked, and shut again, the goods were to the value of four thousand crowns, and the same night he had committed the robbery, he fled towards Mascon, thinking there to put himself on the river Soan, and so slip down to Lyons, and from thence over the Alps into Italy.

De Boys soon missing his treasure, made diligent search after the thief, but could not immediately discover who he was, when hearing of this mountebank's sudden departure, and knowing that he had been the day before at his house, he strongly suspected him to be guilty of the robbery; so pursued him in person, and within four leagues of Mascon, apprehended him, having two provosts men with him, well armed: he found several of his jewels

and rings upon him, but others were missing, which he was never able to recover. Tivoly being brought back to Sens, was first imprisoned, and then examined by the Seneschal, and Procurer Fiscal, and having nothing to say in his defence, the fact being so plain, he was condemned to be hanged the next day. When he was brought to the place of execution, the better to make his peace with God, and unburden his conscience, he there confessed his having poisoned La Precoverte, and that he was hired to do it by Masserina, from whom he received, at the Baths of Pougges, two hundred and fifty crowns, with a small Saphire ring, as a reward for that base and inhuman murder: so after being hanged for the robbery he had committed, his body was ordered to be burnt to ashes for poisoning La Precoverte, whom several persons then present at the execution well knew, and had exceedingly bewailed, being, as has been shewn before, a young creature of so sweet a disposition, and so many religious and moral virtues, that every body loved her who was acquainted with her, except her vile husband, who ought to have set a higher value on her than any one else, considering her love and affection to him.

Now the execution of Tivoly was hardly over, before the magistrates of Sens ordered Masserina, with her old lover but new husband Harcourt, to be apprehended, at their own house of St. Simplician, where they little dreamt of any danger being near them. As soon as the hand of justice was laid upon them, they looked at each other with grief and astonishment, and especially Masserina was seized with all the terrors of despair when she understood that it was the Italian mountebank, who

who at his execution had accused her, but not her husband of causing him to poison La Precouverte. She saw herself a dead woman, yet, though she thought it would be to little purpose, as Tivoly was dead, she resolved to stand upon her defence, but cursed the name and memory of this vile empirick, who could not go out of the world without drawing her ruin after him.

As for her husband Harcourt, he knowing himself to be innocent of this murder, grieved not for the death of his first wife La Precouverte, but extremely lamented the approaching end of his second, Masserina, for he greatly feared there was no possibility of saving her; however, he bade her be of good comfort, telling her, he would spend his whole estate in attempting it, or else die with her. She thanked him for these expressions of his kindness, and assured him, that her tongue should never utter a syllable that might be prejudicial to his reputation, or endanger his life.

After this they were separated, and conveyed into distinct apartments in the prison of Sens: Masserina was first arraigned before the judges, where, according to her former resolution, she stood upon her innocence, not with tears and supplications, but with high words and a most imperious behaviour; but her judges informed her how strongly Tivoly, at his death, had declared, that she had given him two hundred and fifty crowns, and a sapphire ring, to poison La Precouverte, at the house of her father monsieur La Vaquery, at Troyes. Upon which she flew into a great rage, calling him lying and malicious impostor, and protested that she was as innocent, as, without doubt, that

villainous mountebank had been guilty of it himself: but her judges, wife and discreet men, paying little regard to all this noise and passion, ordered her forthwith to the rack, at the sight of which, and having heard how exquisite the pains of it were, she could not bear the thoughts of having her tender limbs exposed to so cruel torments, but confessed at once her having employed Tivoly to perpetrate the base murder of which he had accused her. Her judges then farther demanded whether her husband Harcourt was not likewise accessory to the poisoning his wife La Precouverte, which she absolutely denied, and was so kind to him as not to mention one word of his pistoling her husband Vimory, his brother.

Masserina for this foul fact was sentenced to be hanged the next morning, and for that night was sent back again to prison, where she and her sorrowful husband made great suit to the judges, that they might be allowed a short time to confer with each other; but this could by no means be granted to them, which was a great affliction to them both, and indeed it was very surprizing, that wretches so loaded with crimes, should have this sincere affection for one another; but Harcourt, by some friends, privately caused an offer to be made to the judges of all his lands to save his wife's life, but this proposal was received, as it ought to be by worthy men, with indignation and scorn.

Masserina the next morning, according to her sentence, was brought to the place of execution, but, at her earnest and importunate request, so early that very few people were present at her death; when she ascended the ladder, she again cursed the

the name, and execrated the memory of that wretched villain Tivoly; but prayed for the prosperity and happiness of her husband Harcourt, then turning about and spying a cousin-german of his present, named monsieur de Pierpoint, she called him to her, and was so vain, instead of thinking of better things, as to take a bracelet from her right arm, and prayed him to deliver it to his cousin, assuring him from her, that she died constant in her affection to him, which Pierpoint faithfully promised her to perform. After this, one of the inferior officers of justice, who was there to see the execution, told her, he was commanded by the judges once more to exhort her to confess, if her husband Harcourt was any way accessary to the death of La Precouverte; which she solemnly denied, and assured all the people there present, that he was as innocent of the fact as the child unborn, the guilt of which was all her own, and so she hoped would be the punishment. Then after a few tears, she idly fell to praising his love for her, and her unchangeable affection to him, which she seemed to make her glory, without shewing any remorse of conscience, or tokens of repentance for her many, and shocking crimes.

Now though Harcourt seemed outwardly very sorrowful for this shameful death of his wife, yet he could not help greatly rejoicing with himself to find that she had so strictly kept the secret of his murdering his brother Vimory, and had thereby, as he thought, preserved both his life and his reputation. So being acquitted by the judges of the criminal court of Sens, he returned home to his house at St. Simplician, which being now wholly in his own possession, and being also lord

of a noble manor, and master of a large estate both in lands and money, he took great state upon him, and, as if he had forgot the crimes by which he purchased this wealth, began to live in a very jovial and frolicksome manner, and casting off the remembrance of the deplorable end of his other two wives, was looking about for a third.

But when he thought himself the most secure from danger, or even the suspicion of any thing that might hurt him, then the triumphant power of God's revenge did suddenly and sorely surprize him. His honest man Noel had heard of the murder both of La Precouverte, and Vimory, and had seen the hanging of Tivoly, and of his late mistress Masserina, and could not, from several circumstances, help suspecting his master guilty at least of the murder of his brother. It so happened that this Noel, having leave to go over to a place called St. Lazare to see his father, he was there taken ill of a fever, and was given over by his physicians; upon which, as a Roman-catholick, he received the extreme unction, and then prepared to die; but that he might clear his conscience before he left the world, he desired his father would speedily ride over to Sens, which was not above four leagues, and to beseech one or two of the magistrates to come over to him, for that he had a great secret to reveal, now on his death-bed, which was for the glory of God, the service of the publick, and the good of his own soul.

His father acting according to this request of his dying son, brought over the next day two of the seneschals of the town, in the presence of whom, and
three

three or four more of his father's neighbours, Noel being very sick and weak of body, but sound in mind, declared, that his master Harcourt would heretofore have had him pistol his brother Vimory, for which piece of unnatural service he had proffered him two hundred crowns in money, and an annuity for life of forty crowns more, which he had refused, but hearing afterwards that the said monsieur de Vimory was murdered, and by a pistol, he verily believed that it was his master, or some one by his order, who had perpetrated that cruel murder; the detection of which he said, he left to God and them, and so within half an hour expired.

The judges admiring the providence of God in the evidence of this dying young man, speedily sent away their officers to apprehend Harcourt in his own house, where they found him carousing with several sorts of wine, in company of three or four of his debauched associates, and there laid hold of him, and brought him away to Sens. He was clapped into the prison for that night, and the next morning called down, and arraigned before the judges of the city, for

the murder of his brother Vimory, on the evidence which was taken in writing from the mouth of his late servant Noel; but he strongly denying the fact was adjudged to the rack, whereupon he suffered himself to be fastened, but upon the first touch of the tormentors, with tears in his eyes, he confessed the whole matter; so the judges, without any regard to his descent or quality, condemned him to be broke alive upon the wheel at the publick place of execution, between four and five o'clock the next evening: some few of his friends endeavoured to obtain a reprieve for him, but to no purpose, nor indeed did they gain much credit by the attempt, for by this time the whole town and country expressed the greatest horror for his enormous crimes of adultery and fratricide.

At the hour and place appointed the next day, he was brought before a mighty concourse of people to his execution, where he confessed himself guilty of the fact for which he was about to die; so begging forgiveness of God and the world, he received the punishment so justly due to his iniquity.

GOD's REVENGE

AGAINST

MURDER and ADULTERY.

HISTORY XVIII.

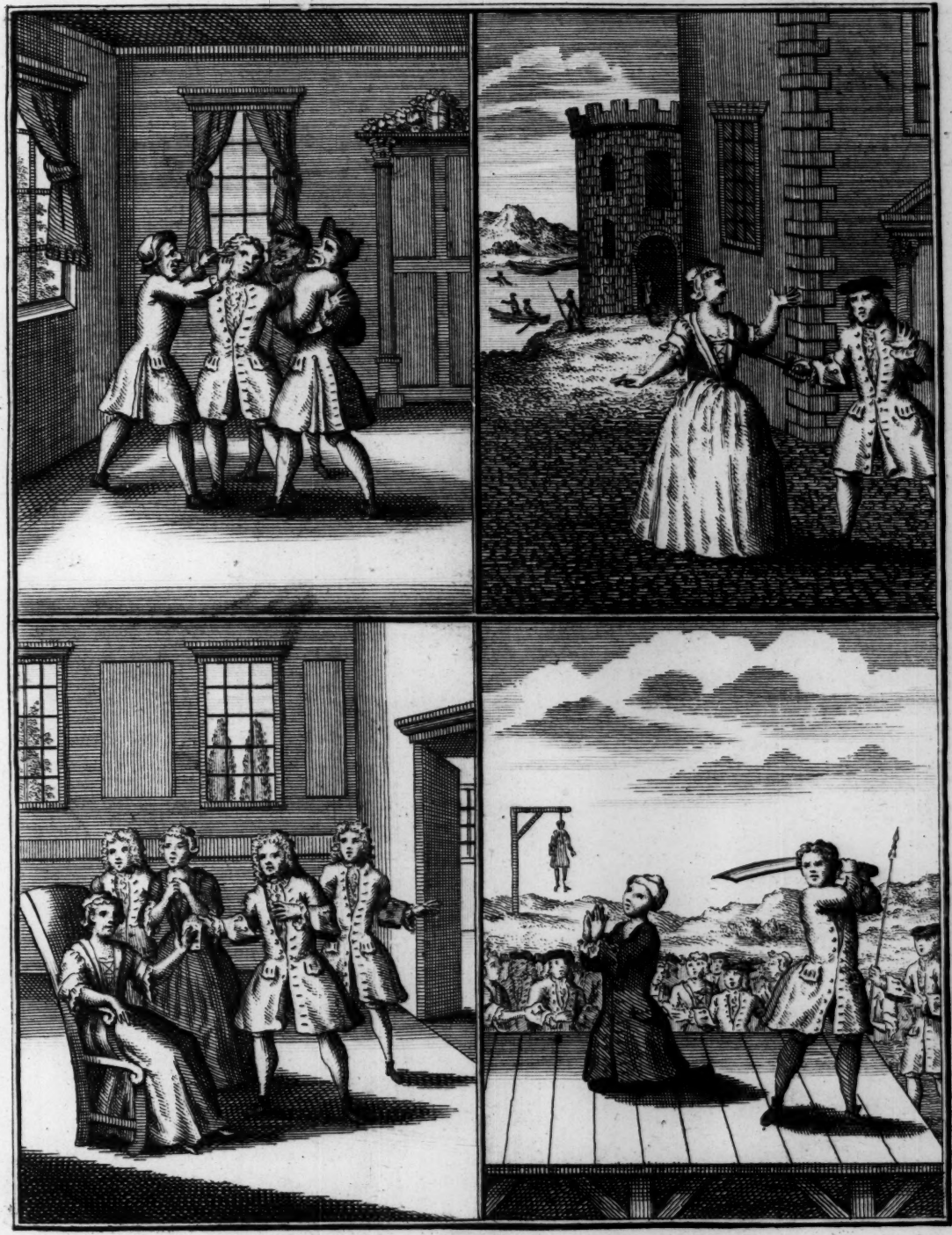
ARGUMENT.

Romeo, Borlary's *Lacquey*, kills Radegonda, the Lady Felisanna's *Chambermaid*, in the Street, and is hanged for the same. Borlary hireth Castruchio, an *Apothecary*, to poison Felisanna's Husband Signor Planeze; for which Castruchio is hanged, and his body thrown into the river, and Borlary is beheaded, and then burnt.

IN the famous city of Verona, there dwelt an ancient gentleman of a noble family, named signor Fabritio Miniata, who was exceeding rich, both in money and lands. This gentleman had one only daughter, named Felisanna, about eighteen years of age, extremely beautiful, and of a most sweet and virtuous disposition. It is no wonder, therefore, that the charms of wealth, beauty, and virtue, all meeting together, should draw many admirers about her; but two of these chiefly flattered themselves with hopes of enjoying this matchless piece of

perfection, which the others were forced to gaze on at a greater distance. The first was signor Thomaso Planeze, a gallant young gentleman of the city of Mantua, about twenty-five years of age, very comely in his person, but not very rich, yet with means sufficient to maintain him like a gentleman; he was extremely well bred, with every necessary accomplishment.

The other was Signor Jovanni Borlary, a very rich gentleman in the same city of Verona, not ill-favoured in his countenance, but hunch-back'd, bandy-legg'd, and drawing near forty years of age; he had





had likewise had but a mean education, and was very awkward in his deportment; yet, on account of his great wealth, Miniata the father was very desirous of having this Borlary for his son-in-law, but not Planeze; and Felifanna the daughter was as desirous of having Planeze for her husband, and not Borlary; which they both perceiving, whilst the latter was courting the favour of the father, the other steered a contrary course, paying all his devoirs to the daughter. Miniata being a covetous man, could see no perfections wanting in Borlary who was so rich; and Felifanna who being delighted with the person and accomplishments of Planeze, had no regard to his want of fortune: the father bade Borlary to be of good cheer, for he should not fail of his daughter for a wife; but the daughter told Planeze, if he would be discreet, she would not fail of taking him for her husband.

Miniata, to shew his regard to Borlary, forbade Planeze his house, and the company of his daughter; but Felifanna assured Planeze that he should have frequent opportunities of enjoying her company, and at the same time forbade Borlary her presence. Thus whilst Borlary often conversed with the father in publick, as often was Planeze happy in private with the virtuous and amiable society of the daughter.

Borlary, notwithstanding he had the persuasions and authority of her father on his side, finding he made no advances in the favour of his mistress, resolved to try what might be effected by the help of her chambermaid Radegonda, who, he imagined, had a great influence over her, and to this end he made her many valuable presents, both in gold and silver, in

requital whereof, with her tongue, she promised him her best power and assistance, but in her heart intended to betray him. He likewise sent some rich presents and two letters to her mistress, which he begged her to seek for a favourable time to deliver to her; this she also promised, but held it most convenient to keep the presents for herself, and to deliver the letters to his rival Planeze, with whom she had for a long while been under a solemn engagement to serve to the utmost of her power: but however this matter was not carried so secretly but Borlary, by some of his emissaries, had a perfect knowledge of it, and took it so unkindly at Radegonda's hands, that consulting more with passion than reason, his heart was so inflamed with choler and revenge against her, that, impatient of all delays, he sent for her one afternoon to meet him at the Amphitheatre, and from thence went with her to the next street to a friend's house of his, where, going into a room with her, and bolting the door on the inside, in a great rage, and with many menaces, he charged her with her ingratitude and treachery to him; so drawing a confession from her of her having delivered the letters to Planeze, and kept the presents herself, he fell upon her in a furious rage, tearing off her head attire, and cutting off all her hair, which he flung in the fire, notwithstanding Radegonda fell on her knees, and with many tears in her eyes besought him to the contrary. When Felifanna was made acquainted with Borlary's having thus disgracefully treated her servant, she was so exasperated against him, that she could not help making complaint of it to her lover Planeze, of the indignity that had been offered her.

Upon

Upon which he immediately proffered his sword and himself to obtain satisfaction of his rival : but Felifanna thanked him for his courtesy, and this proof of his affection and respect, but told him, she had too great a value for him to bear the thoughts of his hazarding his life in such a quarrel, therefore prayed him to lay aside such thoughts, and leave her to revenge Radeconda's wrongs herself.

Borlary, by some of Miniata's domestick servants, whom by favour of his money he had made so many spies upon the young lady, hearing hereof, was greatly enraged at Planeze's forwardness to fight him in the quarrel of a poor chambermaid ; and as he was of a surly temper, and did not want a brutish kind of courage, he resolved to be out-braved by no man, and therefore the next morning sent him this challenge by Romeo his lackey.

BORLARY to PLANEZE.

“ S I N C E you are not content to be-
 “ reave me of my mistress, the fair
 “ lady Felifanna, whose beauties and
 “ virtues are far more precious to me than
 “ my own life, but with malice and vain
 “ ostentation have offered your sword to
 “ revenge the quarrel of a paltry cham-
 “ bermaid, I think myself obliged in
 “ honour to call you to account for your
 “ injustice and insolence. To which end,
 “ I desire you will meet me to-morrow,
 “ between five and six o'clock in the
 “ afternoon, with your single rapier with-
 “ out seconds, in the first meadow with-
 “ out the Venisensa-Gate of this city,
 “ where I will attend your arrival, if you

“ have generosity or courage enough to
 “ meet

“ BORLARY.”

Felifanna having seen Romeo deliver the letter to Planeze, and knowing him to be Borlary's lackey, was very much affraid what it might be, but thought it could be no other than what it was, a challenge ; so trembling for the consequences of it, she entreated Planeze to let her know what the letter from Borlary contained ; though he was unwilling to deny her any request, yet in point of honour he was obliged to it now, and told her, that Signor Borlary had wrote to him, to desire he might speak with him next day in the cathedral church of St. Athanasius, and that he was going to answer his letter, and to promise him the meeting he required ; but Felifanna, still jealous and fearful, conjured him not to quarrel with Borlary ; he told her there was no danger, for had he meant to quarrel, his appointment would not have been in a church ; he therefore supposed he had a mind to talk with him in a peaceable and amicable manner.

Now when Planeze was gone out of the room to answer Borlary's letter, Felifanna, knowing that the lackey that brought it was waiting about the house, she stepped down stairs, and preparing three or four grooms, and other servants for her purpose, she caused Romeo to be fought for, and brought before her into a pavillion in the garden, where she ordered them by force and violence, to cut off his right ear, which they soon performed, notwithstanding he used a thousand intreaties and prayers to divert her from her bloody purpose. When it was done she left the place,
 bidding

bidding him, as she went out, to tell his master Borlary, that she had caused his ear to be cut off, to revenge the affront which he had offered her in cutting off her maid's hair.

Planeze, in the mean time, being retired to answer Borlary's letter, had so high a contempt for him, was concerned that he could not give a proof of his courage, and of his affection to his mistress, by engaging with an antagonist more worthy his sword. However, he accepted his challenge, and in his answer promised to meet him; so sealing up his letter, he went down to deliver it to Borlary's lackey, whom he found weeping and storming for the disgrace that had been put upon him, and for the pain and anguish of the wound. Planeze, being informed of what had happened, was much concerned to find that his mistress Felisanna should give such way to her wrath and indignation, as to revenge herself on the innocent servant, and upon the word and honour of a gentleman, assured him, that he was no way accessory, or in the least privy to the action, and bade him signify the same to his master; so giving him a few crown pieces to wash away his sorrow, he took leave of him.

Romeo said little, but, as the saying is, thought the more, and although he endeavoured as much as was in his power to smother his grief, yet he could not check his choler and revenge in their fatal effects, which time did too soon produce. This lackey being now returned to his master with Planeze's answer, who speedily breaking it open, found it to this purpose:

PLANEZE to BORLARY.

"I Acknowledge it to be rather your
" misfortune than any merit of my
" own, that induced the fair and virtuous
" lady Felisanna to give her affection to
" me, which rich treasure I prize a thou-
" sand times beyond all the world besides;
" and therefore think myself obliged to
" resent whatever injury shall be offered
" to her matchless perfections, or affront
" done to any thing appertaining to her.
" It was not therefore any ostentation in
" myself or malice to you, but my high
" regard for her, that made me offer my
" best service to chastize you for your in-
" solent abuse, which you had put upon
" her maid Radegonda. I cheerfully ac-
" cept your challenge, and will not fail
" of meeting you at the time and place
" appointed.

" PLANEZE."

Borlary having read over Planeze's letter, was well pleased to find his challenge accepted. Then his lackey, Romeo, acquainted him with the disgrace he had suffered, wholly from the malice of Signiora Felisanna, as he protested, he believed, without the consent or knowledge of Planeze, and then related all that he and she had charged him to report to him. Borlary was very much enraged to find the affront he had offered Felisanna in her maid, thus revenged and brought home upon his own lacquey; but having other affairs upon his hands just then, he contented himself for the present by giving him some gold, to make him the sooner forget the loss of his ear.

3 E

These

These two inconsiderate gentlemen, Planeze and Borlary, being infinitely more desirous to preserve their honours than their lives, and more careful of their reputation towards the foolish people of the world, than of their souls towards God, were employed in fitting their rapiers, and preparing for the duel; Planeze was obliged to take much pains to blind the Argus eyes of Felisanna, whose fear and vigilance he was apprehensive might do something to prevent their rash enterprize.

The prefixed hour being come, Borlary, as challenger, came first into the field, with his surgeon, and in less than a quarter of an hour after, Planeze arrived with his surgeon. Their malice was so furious, and their courage so inflamed against each other, that without any salutation, they approached, and at the first thrust Planeze run Borlary through the left thigh, and Borlary wounded him in the right shoulder; the sight of the blood upon their white shirts, did rather increase than allay their fury, for at their second meeting Borlary run Planeze into the right arm, giving him a large and deep wound; but Planeze died not in his debt for it, but requited it with a dangerous one in the small of the belly, which went very near to prove mortal, for it brought much blood from him, and made him begin to faint and stagger: being now both of them almost out of breath, they made a stand to recover their spirits, and then went to it again; and here they traversed the ground to gain the advantage of the sun, with more discretion than they had done before.

At this third encounter, Borlary made a furious thrust at Planeze, but he very actively warding it off, in exchange

run Borlary into the neck, and closing him attempted to trip up his heels; but Borlary's strength prevented what Planeze had like to have done by his agility: so having each other by the collar of their shirts with one hand, and their rapiers in the other, as they were struggling together, God, out of his great mercy, more than to answer their desires, was pleased that neither of them should die at this time; for the count De Lucerne, riding post this way, with three more gentlemen in his company, going from Venice towards Turin, chanced to spy them in the meadow almost covered over with blood, sweat, and dust, when he and his friends leaping from their horses, very charitably ran in to part them, offering his best service to reconcile and make up the difference between them in a friendly manner; but their hatred was so inveterate against each other, that he found that an impossibility to effect; so this brave and generous count contented himself with seeing them safely conducted into the city, where he left them to their future fortune. Our two duellists thanked him for his care and civility towards them, but were not well pleased to have the victory wrested out of their hands, for each of them had so much vanity as to think that he should have been the conqueror, and so much impiety as to have desired the life of the other. Therefore they were very far from looking up to heaven to return thanks to Almighty God for having rescued them from the very jaws of death, but still retained their malice, and cherished and fomented their revenge, especially Borlary, who could enjoy no rest in his mind, seeing himself forced to wear
the

the willow-garland, and that his hated rival Planeze must bear away his beautiful and adorable Felisanna from him. But we will leave them for a while to their own thoughts, and speak of Romeo, the lackey of signor Borlary, which execrable villain was meditating to act a bloody part in this history.

He was so extremely incensed against the lady Felisanna for the loss of his ear, that being instigated by the devil, he had once a mind to have murdered her in the street the first time he could have met with her; but then considering how much she was beloved by his master Borlary, he quitted that thought, and resolved to wreak his vengeance on her maid Radegonda, whom he looked upon as the chief cause of his disgrace, and from this resolution he vowed neither heaven nor hell should divert him; so waiting many nights to catch her, if possible, as she came out of the house in the dark, he at last had the opportunity he wished for, when he fell upon her, giving her four several wounds with his rapier, but he might have spared three of them, because the first was mortal. As soon as he had committed this base and bloody murder, he took to his heels, and fled through the street, where the people were flocked together, on the outcry of the murder. The villain, to provide the best way he could for his escape, ran down to the river Adige, near the old castle, where thinking to swim over, or to hide himself in some of the mill-boats, he was discovered by the centinels, for the watch was already set, and the news of the murder spread through every part of the town.

The soldiers suspecting him for the

murderer, sent a boat after him, and presently apprehended him; and being carried before the criminal judges, he was committed by them to prison for that night, and the next morning accused by signor Maniata, and his daughter the lady Felisanna, of the murder, when without any fear, or signs of sorrow and repentance, he freely confessed it; whereupon he was condemned to be hanged, which sentence was accordingly executed that very afternoon, notwithstanding his master Borlary made the best interest he could, and even proffered a large sum of money to save him. His behaviour at the time of his death was so little edifying, and so very impertinent, that it is not worth while to give the reader an account of it.

Borlary, after spending much time and labour, and having put his invention on the rack to find out means to prevent Planeze's marrying with Felisanna, had at length to his great grief the misfortune to understand, that she, by her prayers and tears, had obtained her father's consent, and that their nuptials were celebrated in Verona, with all the pomp that was suitable to their high rank and quality.

Planeze, to please his new wife, entirely left Mantua, and came to reside at Verona, with his father-in-law signor Maniata, who now had as great a kindness for him, as before he had shewn a dislike to him, and certainly without any reason, for his virtues and good qualities were infinitely superior to those of his rival Borlary, which not only himself but the whole city of Verona were soon made sensible of, by his behaviour to his wife, to her father, and every one else, who had any dealings or conference with him, by

by which he gained the highest esteem, and was the subject of every one's praise.

Now although Felisanna was thus happily married to Planeze, yet did it not abate the violent passion of Borlary, who was vain enough to think he should be yet able to gain that as a gallant, which was now out of his power to do as a husband. And such was the affection, or rather the folly of this mistaken man, that he could have no quiet in his mind, till he had thought of some way to give vent to his amorous flame, and had attempted to win her from the embraces of her deserving husband, and endeavoured to make her prefer his deformity, which was always loathsome to her, to the man who ever was, and might well expect to continue the object of her love and esteem; after long debating with himself in what manner he should declare his sentiments to Felisanna, whether by himself or by some faithful friend, whether by word of mouth, or by writing, this contemptible wretch Borlary at last determined on the latter, and so sent her the following letter:

BORLARY to FELISANNA.

" I Need no other witness of my fervent zeal and affection for you, than my constant behaviour, it having been always my utmost care and ambition to make my devoirs suitable to the dignity of my love, and to the excellence of your great beauty and high perfections. I have sealed my truth with some blood, but more tears; and although you have given your affection to Planeze, yet my heart and soul tells me, it is impossible to give mine to any but the lady Felisanna. And since it is now out of

" your power to become my wife, yet in requital for my faithful love, let me beseech you to be my friend, and as I can be only your's, do you make yourself as much mine as you may be. Your own heart shall not keep the secret of our affections more inviolably safe than my tongue. As for the times and places of our meeting, I wholly refer that to your will and pleasure, which mine shall ever carefully attend, and religiously obey. I send you my whole heart inclosed in this letter, and if you vouchsafe but to send me a part of your's in return, heaven may, but nothing on earth can cross our loves.

" BORLARY."

Felisanna received this letter with much wonder, but read it over with more indignation: for if she disdained Borlary and his affection when she was a maid, and might lawfully listen to his suit, much more did she now despise him, when her own choice, and the religious rites of the church, had made her a wife. She once intended to have thrown his letter into the fire, as not worth an answer; but then again considering the vanity of his thoughts, and the obscenity of his desires, she did not know but he might impute her silence to a degree of consent, therefore, not out of respect to him, but in regard to her own honour, she resolved to send him an answer, which having wrote in great haste, she delivered it to the same messenger that brought his letter.

FELISANNA to BORLARY.

" W Hatever you may say of your affection, I am sure you want no witness of your folly. How you
" do

“ do dispose of yourself is no concern of
 “ mine, nor shall I ever enquire about
 “ it; but as I have given my soul to
 “ God, so God hath given my heart to
 “ my husband Planeze, from whom nei-
 “ ther the malice of Satan, nor the power
 “ of hell shall withdraw it; therefore as
 “ I am Felisanna, I detest your lustful
 “ suit, and as Planeze’s wife, I defy both
 “ it and yourself: you desired I would
 “ be your friend, and so far I will com-
 “ ply with your request as to give you
 “ good advice, which is, to have more
 “ religious sentiments towards the Al-
 “ mighty, and more regard to the world,
 “ than by your preposterous vanity
 “ to make yourself the jest of it. As
 “ for such servants as yourself, I need
 “ them not, but leave them to their own
 “ shame and repentance: whatever se-
 “ crets I have, I trust them to God, and
 “ my affection is wholly due to my hus-
 “ band, nor shall it ever be in your’s,
 “ or any man’s power to erect trophies on
 “ the ruined honour of

“ FELISANNA.”

Borlary was so galled at the receipt of this letter, to find his suit dismissed with so much disdain, that he knew not to what passion to betake himself for ease, whether he should give way to anger, and so study for revenge, whether he should give himself up to despair, and endeavour to forget her, or whether he should hope on, and resolve not to be repulsed at the first denial; this last, as it was the most pleasing, was what he fixed upon, flattering himself, that as women and towns are said to be half won when they begin to parley, there might be yet some prospect of success, since she

had condescended to write to him, though not in the terms he could have wished. He therefore resolved to hazard another letter, knowing also that importunity will oftentimes bring women to do those things which at first they seem to have an abhorrence to; so building these castles in the air of his vain conceit, he sent away the following letter by the same messenger that carried the other:

BORLARY to FELISANNA.

“ **T**HE furious and raging flame
 “ which your transcendent beauty
 “ has kindled in my heart, is not to be
 “ in the least extinguished even by the
 “ scorn and contempt with which you an-
 “ swered my last letter. Nor indeed can
 “ any thing have that power, but what
 “ must at the same time extinguish and
 “ put a period to my life; for although
 “ you term my love folly and obstinacy,
 “ yet until you cease to be so fair, think
 “ it not strange that I cannot cease lov-
 “ ing you. As the strongest towns and
 “ castles by the rule of war, so the fairest
 “ beauties by that of love, deserve to be
 “ honoured with more than one assault or
 “ siege; and that cavalier cannot justly
 “ merit the name of a gentleman, a sol-
 “ dier, or a lover, who will resolve to
 “ be put off with the first repulse, espe-
 “ cially from so sweet and so inviting a
 “ prize as yourself. Neither can it beget
 “ either shame or repentance in me to
 “ be the servant, or even the slave of
 “ so fair a mistress, because the excellence
 “ of your beauty is sufficient to justify the
 “ most extravagant passion, and the most
 “ daring enterprize in attempting to pos-
 “ sess it. O, that thou wert but as cour-
 “ teous

“teous as thou art fair, and as kind as I
 “am constant, then wouldst thou make
 “that servant happy, whose greatest de-
 “light would be to make thee so; and
 “who can know no pleasure but in thy
 “smiles; nor feel any sorrow but from
 “thy disdain.

“BORLARY.”

Felisanna having read over this second letter of Borlary, could not help laughing on one side to see the constancy of his folly and indiscretion, and on the other was highly provoked at his having the assurance to pester her with his immodest and unlawful suit. So going to the messenger who brought the letter, she vented part of her choler upon him, for having the audacity to come on such an errand to her, and strictly charged him not to dare to bring any more: and tho’ she resolved to send no answer, and to burn them if he should continue to trouble her with his impudent billet-doux; yet she was very much perplexed in her thoughts to know what she should do with the two she had already, whether to conceal them, or shew them to her husband; for her affection was so tender, so faithful, and so constant to him, that she would rather displease herself than any way give him the least uneasiness or discontent. If by concealing them the matter could be entirely hushed up in oblivion, she thought it would be well; but if, on the other hand, Borlary through malice to her, or out of his own usual vanity, should mention them so that the knowledge thereof should come to Planeze’s ear, she feared it might justly give him cause to be offended with her, in that she had not communicated the business to him. She

knew that there was nothing so easy to entertain as jealousy, and nothing so difficult to expel; and as it is not enough for a woman to be satisfied with her own innocence, but she must take all imaginable care to prevent suspicion. Fain she would have concealed these foolish letters of Borlary from her husband, but yet doubted some ill consequence from it, and feared no less if she should acquaint him with them. The consciousness of her own virtue and chastity prompted her to the first, but the fondness she had for her husband invited her to the last; so waiting for a convenient opportunity, she first shewed him Borlary’s first letter, with her answer to it; and then his second, which she informed him, she had only answered with silence and contempt. Adding withal, that if she had a thousand lives instead of one, she would cheerfully sacrifice them all, before she would be guilty of the least thought to stain the honour of his bed, or break the sacred vow of love and chastity, which she had plighted to him in the presence of God, and confirmed by the holy bonds of matrimony.

Planeze was both grieved and pleased at this intelligence; grieved to find that the vile lecher Borlary should have so much boldness to pursue his wife, and to endeavour to violate her honour with such incessant importunities, and pleased to see with how much virtue and resolution she could answer so daring an invader of her spotless chastity, which he extolled to the skies, while he condemned the inordinate passion and brutish behaviour of Borlary to the lowest depth of hell. Felisanna, although she discovered some incongruity in his words, and some perturbation in his looks, yet he made his affection so apparent

parent to her, and dissembled his hatred and choler to Borlary so artificially, that she, relying wholly upon her own integrity, and her husband's discretion, little dreamed of any disaster that might follow upon her having shewn him Borlary's letters; but she, alas! perceived it too soon; for Planeze, consulting with his passion rather than his reason, could take no rest till he had called Borlary to an account for his attempt on his wife, which he had much better have looked upon with scorn than resentment; but his resolution being fixed, nothing less than the blood of his enemy could satisfy him; wherefore he sent the following challenge to him by his surgeon:

PLANEZE to BORLARY.

"YOUR crime is so foul in seeking,
 " by your lascivious letters, to dis-
 " tain my honour in that of my wife's,
 " that nothing but your life can expiate
 " it; wherefore, if you have as much
 " courage as you want grace, bring your-
 " self and your rapier, with your sur-
 " geon, tomorrow morning at six o'clock,
 " to the city ditch, without the gate that
 " looks towards Brescia; and there my-
 " self and my surgeon, who is the bearer
 " hereof, will wait for you. If your
 " obscene heart retain any spark of ge-
 " nerosity you will not refuse to meet the
 " injured

" PLANEZE."

Borlary having read this challenge, was much concerned to see that Felisanna had so little discretion towards herself, and so much hatred to him, as to shew her husband his letters, which she could not but

know would be attended with fatal consequences; nor did he a little wonder that Planeze should want again to make trial of his valour, which he had so lately experienced; and though he had no reason to think that this second duel would prove more fortunate than the first, but rather terminate with one if not both their lives; and as he loved Felisanna so much, notwithstanding her aversion, he would by no means refuse fighting her husband, the devil making him strong in the vanity of this belief, that if he should chance to kill Planeze, he might obtain her as a reward of his victory. But this was consulting with Satan, and not the Almighty, therefore it was no marvel if his lascivious desires came short of his ridiculous hopes, which both ended in misery and destruction.

Borlary, having taken a turn or two in his garden, to consider what answer he should send to Planeze, returned to the surgeon, and desired him to let Planeze know, that he would not fail meeting him the next morning, according to his request and expectation, and very civilly dismissed him, who returned with his answer to Planeze, whom he found, as was appointed, in the church of the Augustin friars, without any intention of devotion, but with a heart too full of revenge and malice to be suitable to a place of divine worship.

The night, which brings rest to others, had not power to give it our enraged duellists; for their thoughts were so possessed with the occasion of their quarrel, and the malice they bore to each other, that sleep could gain no admission, but every moment seemed tedious to them till they could sate their revenge in each other's blood.

blood. The morning being come, they were very soon in the field; Planeze entered first, and walking some turns, Borlary came afterwards, and seeing Planeze there, was ashamed to have this advantage taken of him, therefore prayed Planeze to excuse his delay, which he assured him was owing to the error of his watch; and Planeze admitting his excuse, without more words they drew their swords, and began the combat.

At their first meeting Borlary gave Planeze a wound in the right arm, and Planeze requited him with another in his right side, which, if his rapier had not met with a rib, had undoubtedly ended the quarrel with his life. Although this wound caused a great effusion of blood, yet he had strength and courage left not to die in his debt for it, only he desired Planeze that they might breathe a little, which he generously consented to. At their second encounter, Planeze made a strong thrust at Borlary, which he parried, and ran Planeze into the left thigh, giving him a very deep wound, but yet they would not give over, although their surgeons earnestly prayed them to desist, as they had already sufficiently testified their valour. At their third meeting, Borlary gave Planeze a cut upon the forehead, which made the blood stream down his face, and running into his eyes, almost blinded him; upon which Planeze, fully incensed and prepared to requite him, made a fair thrust at Borlary's breast, which he very dextrously put by, beating down the point of Planeze's sword, but he, with great agility, leaping into him, tript up his heels, who falling on his own rapier, broke it in two pieces; at which unlooked for accident, Borlary seeing his

naked breast exposed to Planeze's sword, and consequently his life at his mercy, being now more desirous to live with shame than die with honour, he descended so low as to beg his life of the man whom he had so greatly affronted. And altho' many hot and jealous spirits would gladly have taken hold of this advantage, and wreaked their utmost malice on an enemy thus in their power, yet Planeze was so noble and generous, that he disdained to fight an unarmed man, and thereby to eclipse and tarnish his reputation; therefore he was contented with making him promise and swear that he would never more attempt the honour of his wife; then throwing away his sword, gave him his life, and very courteously lent him his hand to raise him on his feet, for which kindness Borlary returned him infinite thanks.

Our combatants having muffled up their faces in their cloaks, parted very good friends, betaking themselves into the two nearest houses of the suburbs, that they might have their wounds dressed privately, and then returned home to their houses. The virtuous Felisanna understanding the manner and cause of this duel between her husband and Borlary, bestowed as many tears and sighs for the loss of her husband's blood, as she did thanks to almighty God for having been pleased to spare his life.

This affair was not transacted so secretly; but in two day's time the whole city of Verona talked of it, and, as usual in the like cases, every one gave judgment upon what had passed. Some extol Borlary's courage in fighting with Planeze, and all applauded Planeze's generosity in giving Borlary his life, when
he

he had him in his power. And though most commended Felisanna for disdaining to make shipwreck of her honour on the rock of Borlary's lust, and for not sacrificing her chastity to his lascivious passion, yet she was greatly condemned for her indiscretion in shewing his letters to her husband, since it would have been sufficient to have justified her own virtue by giving a denial to his suit.

Again there wanted not several, especially among the younger class of gallants in Verona, that taxed Borlary with cowardice, in shamefully begging his life of Planeze, when either his good fortune by struggling, or else with one piece of the sword in his defence, he might perhaps have preserved it; and at worst it would have been better to have died honourably than to receive life from the bounty of another, whom he knew he had attempted to injure in the tenderest point.

Borlary having lost much blood for the affection he bore to Felisanna, and having received nothing from her but disdain and hatred, was not a little grieved; but when he understood that he was become the jest of all Verona, and despised for his meanness in begging his life of her husband, and being pierced to the very soul with sorrow, he was hardly able to hold up his head for shame. He thought it would have been better for him to have been born a peasant, than to have lost the name of a gentleman in that of a coward, which base title, when once purchased, is not easily got rid of. Wherever he went, he observed that not only his superiors and equals, but even his inferiors, looked at him with scorn, and pointed, as it were, at his infamy. This galled him in such a

manner, that it made him almost ashamed of himself, and filled his mind with such anxiety and perturbation, that he vowed to be revenged on Planeze, from whom his disgrace proceeded, and very shortly to dispatch him, either by his own or some other hand.

Such was the condition of this execrable wretch Borlary, that his monstrous ingratitude prompted him to conspire against the life of the person who so lately gave him his own. He little considered, that revenge still proves as destructive in the end, as at first it may seem pleasing to the authors of it, and that murder always ends in misery, what fair advantages ~~sover~~ it may promise in the beginning. But Borlary was now too much in the power of the devil to admit of any thoughts to divert him from his horrid purpose: once he had an intention to have dispatched him in the street with a poniard or pistol, but then remembering the misfortune of Romeo his lacquey, he thought that too hazardous, and so resolved on poison, which he believed would be the shortest and safest way of sending him out of the world; and judging no one could be so proper to administer it to him as Planeze's own apothecary, Castruchio; the choice of whom he the sooner determined upon, because he knew him to be very poor, and withal very vicious and debauched, more an atheist than a christian, and to have very little conscience or humanity, he therefore thought money would act wonders on such man nor was he deceived, for he no sooner mentioned the affair to him, offering him three hundred ducatoons to poison Planeze, half to be paid in hand, and the remainder when the work was performed,

but he accepted his proffer, engaging himself to do the business, and joined with him in swearing secrecy to each other.

Borlary longing, and Castruchio being as much desirous to finish the tragedy on Planeze, that he might touch the last hundred and fifty ducatoons, had very soon an opportunity of accomplishing their wishes, for the spring of the year approaching, Planeze, as was his custom, sent for Castruchio to give him some physic, for the preservation of his health, who having first blooded and then purged him, very artfully prevailed upon him to take a vomit, and gave him such very good reasons for so doing, that he consented to it: so Castruchio having the occasion he sought for, took care to infuse such deadly poison into the potion he gave him, that in six days time he put a period to his life, and gave this vile apothecary a right to demand his other hundred and fifty ducatoons of Borlary, which he very readily and very chearfully paid him.

And now the order of our history leads us to the young sorrowful widow Felisanna, who, unhappy lady, not dreaming either of poison or Borlary, was ready to weep herself to death, nay, she wished that she could die with her dear, her loved Planeze, and that, as one bed had long contained them, now one grave might do the same. Her grief was so great, and her sorrow so infinite for the loss of this dear, this other better half of herself, that her father, kinsfolks and friends, tried all means in vain to comfort her; for still Planeze was before her eyes, as if he were not buried in his grave but in her heart only; and this excess of sorrow ex-

pressed in her constant sighs and tears, did so wither the roses of her cheeks, and so eclipse the lustre of her sparkling eyes, that she no longer seemed to be the real substance of the fair and beautiful Felisanna, but only her shadow.

Borlary, and the execrable apothecary Castruchio, who yet felt no remorse for the horrid murder committed on the person of the noble and generous Planeze, did not go long unpunished, and though they hitherto blinded the eyes of the world, yet the great God, who knows the secrets of all hearts, soon brought their villainy to light.

The wretched apothecary, as we have said before, having received his last hundred and fifty ducatoons from Borlary, and being of a lewd and dissolute life, was now become by many degrees worse than ever; and as such ill-gotten wealth can never prosper with any, so this, with his riotous and beastly pleasures was consumed away like snow against the sun, and wasted in such sort that he seemed a thief to himself, and with one hand robbing the other. He had indeed for a time maintained his vicious course of life so secretly, that every one was not acquainted with it; but since the perpetrating this foul murder, all went to wreck, his credit, as well as his goods and chattels, of which he had nothing left unsold or unpawned; and what was yet worse, he had contracted many debts, which now became clamorous, especially since his prodigal and beastly life of whoring, drunkenness and gaming, came to be divulged and known to the whole world. So by three of his greatest creditors he was arrested and clapped into prison, and his shop seized on, which

was

was found to be as empty of drugs, as its master's heart was of honour or honesty.

And as it is the nature, and indeed one part of the misery of prisons, that where one man improves his life and actions, in taking warning by the bad examples he sees there, a hundred are utterly ruined thereby, and from bad are made worse; so Castruchio, being of this latter sort, there wasting the little he had left, and all he could possibly procure, was in a few weeks reduced to such extreme poverty, that he was clapped on the common side of the jail amongst the poorest prisoners, who live by alms, his cloaths being tattered and torn, having no bed to lie on, nor hardly so much bread to eat as would suffice nature, and was at the same time abandoned by all his former friends and acquaintance, who detesting his scandalous life, would every one of them rather see him starve than afford him any relief. Only Dorilla, a filthy old bawd of his, more through importunity than any real kindness for him, consented sometimes to send him her son Bernardo, a lad of about sixteen years of age, to go of his errands; and after he had employed this lad in many fruitless messages to the rest of his acquaintance, he at length resolved to send him with his requests to Borlary, who, though he had paid him for the wicked service he had done him, yet he thought he had him so much in his power, for fear of his divulging the secret of that business, that he dared not refuse him whatever he should think proper to ask; and in this he judged right, while he sent but seldom, and for small sums; but when he came to make large demands, and to repeat them

often, Borlary, quite wearied out, resolved to part with no more money, nor even speak with or see his messenger Bernardo, and accordingly ordered his servants to deny him admittance whenever he came. Bernardo finding that he wore out his time and shoes in vain by following Borlary, would no longer have any thing to say to him, and told Castruchio that he must provide himself with another messenger, for he would not go any more, seeing it was to no purpose. Castruchio was much displeased at being thus forsaken by Borlary as well as the rest of his acquaintance, and vowed revenge; but the consideration of the danger he might be in himself, made him silent for a while. But God did not have it continue long, for this silence soon broke forth into extream choler and indignation.

His old bawd Dorilla, an expert hag in her sinful vocation, as often as she heard or knew that Castruchio had any money from Borlary, would come to the prison to him, and soon helped to consume it by drinking and carousing with him; but when, by her son Bernardo she found Borlary's purse was shut, and that fountain exhausted, she would neither come herself to the prison, nor suffer her boy; so that Castruchio not having received any thing from Borlary for near a month, was ready to perish, therefore he sent to Dorilla, earnestly intreating her to come once more, and desired her to be told, if she would deliver a letter to a friend of his, he was sure of an handsome sum of money, and she should have a share of it. This news of money, though no other consideration could, soon brought the old beldam to him in the prison, where he

he gave her the following letter for Borlary, charging her to be speedy and secret in the delivery of it :

CASTRUCHIO to BORLARY.

“ YOU know that for three hundred
 “ ducatoons, which you gave me,
 “ I poisoned signor Planeze in a vomit,
 “ and after having done you so great a
 “ service, will you be so cruel and hard-
 “ hearted as to suffer me to starve in a
 “ prison for want of twenty ducatoons,
 “ which is all I require of you at this
 “ time ? I am made of the same flesh and
 “ blood that you are, and although my
 “ misfortunes have plunged me so low,
 “ yet my spirit and heart is high enough
 “ to assure you, that I would rather be
 “ hanged at once than to starve and
 “ perish by inch-meal. Wherefore, as
 “ my tragedy will draw on your own,
 “ if you mean by preventing one to put
 “ a stop to the other, fail not forthwith
 “ to send the afore said twenty ducatoons
 “ by the bearer Dorilla, whom I have
 “ intrusted with my letter fast sealed, and
 “ so may you with yours ; but for the
 “ secret therein, which you know of, she
 “ is wholly ignorant of it. In doing me
 “ this courtesy, you shall wholly tie up
 “ my tongue to silence. In the midst of
 “ your great wealth remember my po-
 “ verty ; but if you will not, you shall
 “ find that I am resolved to let you know,
 “ that you do not properly use, but abuse
 “ it, and thereby yourself also.

“ CASTRUCHIO.”

Dorilla, having received this letter from Castruchio, put it in her purse, and promised her best care and fidelity in the

delivery of it to Borlary, but owned that she neither knew him nor his house. She had not gone far before she met with some of her lewd and dissolute acquaintance in the street, with whom she went to a tavern, where they swilled so much wine, especially this old bawd, that they were hardly able to stand upon their legs, and having forgot herself, it was no wonder she did not remember Castruchio's letter ; but after she had got into the air, and reeled a great part of her way home, it came into her head that she had it in her pocket, but as for the name, she had entirely lost the remembrance of that ; however reeling about till she had got in the middle of the city, she saw a beautiful young lady in mourning, standing at a door, to whom she made up, and accosting her in the civilest manner such a drunkard was capable of, she prayed her to read the superscription of the letter, and tell her the name of the gentleman to whom it was directed.

Here let us admire at the wonderful providence of God, who in order to a discovery of the murder committed by this vile apothecary, and contrived by the wicked Borlary, lead this wretched old woman to the very house of the murdered Planeze, whose sorrowful young widow Felifanna was then standing at the door, and who had no sooner read the hated name of Borlary, but her countenance changed, and she grew almost faint with the sight of it : but recovering herself a little, she asked Dorilla from whom she brought that letter, who very readily made answer, that it came from Castruchio, an apothecary, who then lay in prison ; Felifanna never hearing before that Borlary and Castruchio were acquainted, she

she presently conceived so strong a suspicion of some foul dealing between them in relation to her husband, that she could not resist the violent inclination she had to read the contents of the letter; so desiring her to walk into the house, upon pretence that she could not read it herself, but would ask her father to do it, she left the old bawd in the hall, and going into an inner parlour herself, there breaking up the seal, in an instant was brought to the knowledge of her husband's murderers; which occasioned such a disorder in her mind, that she shrieked out in a terrible manner, and would have fallen to the ground that instant in a swoon, if her father and some of the servants, hearing the outcry, had not come to her assistance. Miniata lifting up his fainting daughter, and seeing her in a bitter agony, and overwhelmed with the passion of sorrow, demanded the cause thereof. When the afflicted young lady, with the brinish tears trickling down her vermillion cheeks, and with her eyes lifted up to heaven, had the will but not the power to speak to him, but reaching out the letter, gave him that to read; whereupon he was astonished, and almost as much grieved as his daughter for the murder of his son-in-law Planeze; and enquiring of her who brought that letter, she, after many sighs and tears, told him, that it was the providence of the Lord that sent it to her by a drunken old woman, who was then in the hall.

Upon which they both went to her, and finding her fast asleep, and snoring in an elbow chair, Miniata pulling her by the sleeve, awaked her, and then demanded, before his daughter and the servants, from whence she brought that

letter; the bawd, drunk as she was, still continued in the same tone, that she had it from Castruchio, an apothecary, who then lay in prison; but said, she had forgot the name of the gentleman to whom she was to deliver it, and begged they would read it for her, and give her the letter again.

Miniata, verily believing that it was the immediate finger of God which had thus strangely revealed the murder of his son-in-law, called in two gentlewomen, his neighbours, to comfort his daughter Felisanna, and so leaving Dorilla to the guard of some of his servants, took his coach, and having Castruchio's letter in his hand, drove to the senate-house, where finding the podestate and prefect of the city, and shewing them the letter, which mentioned the poisoning his son-in-law Planeze, they, in honour to justice, and out of respect to the sorrowful young lady, his daughter, went back with him to his house, where they first examined Felisanna upon the manner of the letter's being delivered to her, and then interrogated Dorilla, who was constant in what she first said: whereupon these worthy magistrates, greatly surprized to find a gentleman of Borlary's rank and fortune, the author of so foul a murder; but more admiring at the wonderful providence of God in making this discovery of it, immediately sent away their iibiers or serjeants to apprehend Borlary; after which they repaired to the forum, or seat of justice, and ordered Castruchio to be brought before them from the prison, who, at the very first mention of what he was accused of, cursed the old bawd Dorilla as the cause of his ruin, and then freely confessed himself guilty of the murder, and that it was done

at the instigation of signor Borlary, and for the reward of three hundred ducatoons, as was before related.

The serjeants being come, by the order of the podestate and prefect, to the house of Borlary, found him at home, in a rich new suit of apparel, he being the next day to have gone over to Bergamo, to pay his addresses to a young widow, whose husband was lately dead, and had left her immensely rich.

Thus was he pleasing his fond hopes with the expectation of more wealth and more joys, without once reflecting on his past villainy, or dreaming how near he was to the end of all his happiness in this life. When the officers of justice laid hold of him, he stood for a time like one stupified, then beating his breast, and wringing his hands, he began to repent, for the first time, of his having embrewed his hands in the innocent blood of Planeze.

Borlary and Castruchio were now both at the senate-house, and having been first examined apart were confronted with each other; neither of them pretended to deny the fact, so both received sentence of death; Borlary to have his head cut off, and his body burnt to ashes; Castruchio to be hanged, and have his body thrown into the river Adige. All Verona was, as it were, but one tongue to talk of this foul murder, and of God's miraculous detection of it, by the old bawd Dorilla, who having formerly brought Castruchio whores most willingly, had now brought him to the gallows against her will.

Early in the morning the two offenders were brought to their execution, at which were a multitude of spectators from all parts of the city, and places adjacent.

And although the charity of their judges sent them priests and friars to direct their souls to heaven, yet the miserable wretch Castruchio shewed very few signs of repentance, but muttering some words to himself, desired the hangman to do his office, which he did, and within two hours, his body, pursuant to his sentence, was thrown into the river.

But when Borlary came to the scaffold, he seemed better prepared, with tears in his eyes, and sorrow in his countenance, and in a short speech to the people, he told them, that he was grieved at his heart and soul, for the lamentable murder which he had committed on the body of Planeze, and also for seducing Castruchio to be his instrument therein, for whose death, he said, he was likewise exceedingly afflicted, as he had been the cause of it; that it was the temptation of the flesh and the devil, that first drew him lustfully to affect the fair and virtuous Felisanna, and consequently to murder her husband, in hopes afterwards of obtaining her for a wife, or a courtesan.

He very earnestly first asked pardon of God, and then of the lady Felisanna; and likewise beseeched all who were present to pray for him, and said, if he had been but half as careful of doing his duty to God, as he had been of endeavouring to avoid the reproaches of the world, he had not now been brought to that ignominious death.

After this, being allowed a short time for his private devotion, he again lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, most fervently prayed for God's mercy, and recommending his soul to his blessed Redeemer, made a signal to the headsmen to do his office, which he performed with

so

so much dexterity, that at one stroke of his sword he made a perpetual divorce between his soul and body, which last a few hours after was burnt to ashes, according to the sentence most justly pronounced upon him.

Thus have we seen the bloody lives, and deserved ends, of these three irre-
ligious and unfortunate persons; Romeo the lacquey; Borlary the gentlem an;

and Castruchio the apothecary: and in this manner did the justice of the Lord, in his due time, triumph over their execrable crimes, in the severe and shameful punishment of them.

We pray, that whoever reads this history may do it with an awful fear, and, as religious and godly christians, remember their lamentable murders with horror and detestation.



GOD'S REVENGE

AGAINST

MURDER and ADULTERY.

HISTORY XIX.

ARGUMENT.

Baumarays and his brother Montagne, kills Champigny and Marin, his second, in a Duel; Blancheville, the widow of Champigny, in return thereof, hireth La Valley, Servant to Baumarays, to murder his master with a pistol, for which he is broke alive on the Wheel, and Blancheville is hanged.

IN the city of Chartres in France, there dwelt two young gentlemen of great wealth and quality, being both heirs to their fathers lately deceased, the name of one was Champigny, and of the other Baumarays, whose lands lay within seven leagues of the city, in the way to Vendôme; these gentlemen were pretty much of an age, Champigny being twenty-six years old, and Baumaray's twenty-four; the first was the richer, but the other the more nobly descended. It happened that these young gentlemen were both at the same time in love with

the daughter of monsieur De Rosaire, a very rich council of the presidial court of Chartres, called mademoiselle Blancheville, about eighteen years of age, very beautiful in her person, but of a haughty and imperious temper: Champigny and Baumarays were such importunate suitors, that one of them could scarce ever be in the young lady's company, but the other was present, which begat some malice but more emulation between them; but in the end, after a whole year's courtship and more, as the willow was destined for Baumarays, so was the laurel for Champigny,





pigny, who by the daughter's choice, and the father's consent, was publicly married to her.

Baumarays knowing his birth to be more noble, and his breeding, as he thought, more generous than Champigny's, was extremely discontented to see him thus preferred to him in the lady's affection; and was therefore so full of resentment, that he could not forgive the injury which he imagined was done him. Being one night at supper with five or six gentlemen, where Blancheville's name happened to be mentioned, he was so transported with malice and revenge, that without any foundation for such a reflection, he dropt these words, "that she had more pride than chastity;" a rash speech, which in time he had cause to remember and repent. The Honour of a lady ought always to be dear to men of honour, because the loss of a lady's reputation is never to be repaired, or at least not so perfectly but some stain or blemish will remain.

This undeserved slander of Baumaray's on his quondam mistress, fell not to the ground, for such was the misfortune of the times, and the depravation of our manners, that there are few companies without a fool or traitor in them; and oftentimes both; and so it happened at this time, that one monsieur Marin, a gentleman of Chartres, more vain than honest, who being very desirous of working himself into the favour and familiarity of Blancheville, officiously run to acquaint her with this reflection of Baumaray's, whereat she was exceedingly incensed, but, like a true woman, dissembled her malice at present, in order to make it burst forth with more fury

whenever she might see a proper opportunity.

In the mean while there fell out an unexpected difference between her husband and Baumarays, on account of precedence, they being often forced to meet together upon several publick occasions; Baumarays pretended the right was due to his birth, but Champigny was of too high a spirit to yield it to him.

The dispute at length went so far, that Baumarays having recourse to law, commenced a suit in the presidial court of Chartres, which court had cognizance of such affairs. Blancheville, who was rather rejoiced than vexed at this quarrel, brought no water to quench it, but most willingly threw an oil to enflame it. This new affront offered to her husband, added to the abuse of herself, had so enraged her against Baumarays, that she had no peace in her mind till she had vented her spleen, which she did partly by the following letter:

BLANCHEVILLE to BAUMARAYS.

"WAS it not enough for you to
 " have wronged my honour in
 " your false and scandalous reflection
 " upon me to monsieur Marin and others,
 " but you must now perplex my husband
 " with the trouble and expence of the
 " laws, and endeavour to set yourself
 " above one who is so greatly your superior? these abuses are such, that if you
 " are a gentleman you will not refuse to
 " acknowledge them, and ask pardon.
 " I have not yet acquainted my husband
 " with the liberty you have taken with
 " my reputation, nor with my writing
 " this letter; therefore consider in good
 " time.

"time what you can do to make reparation for the injuries you have done us, left the consequences of your refusal may cause you to repent it. As soon as I know your answer and resolution, you may hear again from

"BLANCHEVILLE."

Having written this letter, she was irresolute with herself, by whom to send it to him, but at last she gave it to her chambermaid Martha, to whom only she intrusted this great secret, charging her to deliver it into Baumaray's own hands, and to demand his answer. Martha, who was a very pretty young woman of about twenty-two, going to Baumaray's house, she met with a young man, named La Valley, his servant, who told her his master was at present busy with two gentlemen in his study, but that she should speak with him as soon as they departed. But in the interim, his eyes could not help amorously glancing on the sweet charms of this young virgin, wherewith his heart was captivated at first sight: then giving her many kisses, he entertained her with much love-prattle, assuring her, that from that instant he would continue her servant till death.

About half an hour after the two gentlemen had taken leave of his master, La Valley introduced Martha to him, who delivered her mistress's letter, at which he was much surprized, and leaving her in the hall with his man La Valley, stepped into his study to peruse it, which he did not without laughing at the folly of it; however he could not help accusing his own indiscretion in

speaking against Blancheville's chastity, and exceedingly condemned Marin's treachery in revealing it to her.

Once he was inclined to have sent an answer to her letter in writing, but at last scorning both her and that resolution, and stepping out to Martha, with a disdainful frown in his countenance, bade her tell her mistress from him, that her malicious, proud, and foolish letter, deserved no answer but contempt and silence. Martha nevertheless thought it her duty to press him for one, but he was resolute in what he first said, and she parted from him much discontented; but the master was not more uncivil to Martha, than his man La Valley was kind and courteous, who saw her the better half of her way home, and calling at a shop as they went along, bought a pair of gloves, which as a pledge of his future affection he bestowed upon her, and the favour she took so kind, that she promised to wear them for his sake.

As soon as Martha got home to her mistress, she delivered Baumaray's answer verbatim, but no letter. Blancheville seeing herself thus slighted, and being strangely transported with choler, vowed revenge, but knew not as yet in what manner to execute it, only she resolved not yet to acquaint her husband with the affair, but watch for an opportunity to satisfy her malice.

Two years were now almost past since Baumarays and Champigny, to their cost, had prosecuted their law-suit in the presidial court of Chartres, which was at length determined in favour of Baumarays, and the right of precedence adjudged to be his, and Champigny condemned in five hundred crowns charge and damages.

This

This thundering sentence, so prejudicial, and contrary to Champigny's own, and his proud wife's hopes and expectation, drove him into extreme rage, and her out of all patience with Baumarays; and although he had once a mind to have appealed from his sentence of the presidial court of Chartres, to the court of parliament at Paris, yet he was powerfully diverted by some of his best friends from that resolution, which would but have enhanced his expences.

Champigny was so terribly mortified at Baumarays having thus got the better of him, that he could not behold him without the utmost malice and envy; nor could his wife hear his name mentioned but the blood rose in her face, and her very soul was filled with the severest pangs of rage and indignation; she was bent on revenge, and continually urging her husband on to do something to satisfy it. And that she might the better prevail upon him, she now thought it a proper time to acquaint him with Baumaray's base and scandalous reflection on her honour, which she did with many sighs and tears, and shewing him a copy of a letter which she had sent by her maid Martha, and likewise informing him of his rude and disdainful answer to it. Champigny being so much incensed at all this, which, added to the resentment he had before, made it needless for his wife to use any more arguments to incite his revenge, that he grew impatient of delay or better counsel, but instantly finding out Marin, who confirmed what Blancheville had told him, engaged him for his second, and immediately sent Baumarays the following challenge by his footman Serou:

CHAMPIGNY to BAUMARAYS.

“AS your own knowledge is judge, so monsieur Marin is witness of the base and ignoble speeches you have vented against the honour and chastity of my wife. And as such abuses are odious both to God and man, and no way tolerable by a husband, you may thank yourself, if, for reparation hereof, your folly does oblige me to call upon you, to meet me with your second on horseback, on Tuesday next, between six and seven in the morning, without the north hedge of the first vineyard beyond the river, where you shall find me and my second to attend you. And comparing the equity of my cause, with the injustice and meanness of your's, it makes me fully confident, that the event of this duel will be as shameful to you, as it will be successful and honourable to me.

“CHAMPIGNY,”

Serou having found Baumarays, very secretly gave him his master's letter, who, stepping aside to a window to read it, could not but be much surprized at the rashness of Champigny, the foolish malice of his wife Blancheville, and the base treachery of Marin; but as he disdained to be outbraved by any man in point of honour and courage, especially by Champigny, whom he looked upon as much his inferior in every respect, immediately returned the following answer to his letter:

BAUMARAYS to CHAMPIGNY.

“AS I will not make myself judge, so I desire not to be a witness of your wife's chastity or folly; she is
“your

" your own, and to yourself I leave her
 " entirely, whatever respect I might for-
 " merly have had for her. As to Ma-
 " rin, I hope he may soon have occa-
 " sion to repent of his treachery, as you
 " shall of your jealousy and temerity;
 " and since your choler has transported
 " you so far as to seek to maintain your
 " wife's reputation at the hazard of your
 " life, know that I accept your challenge,
 " and give you to understand, that I, with
 " my second, will meet you and your's
 " on horseback, at the time and place
 " appointed, where we doubt not but
 " to acquit ourselves as men of honour,
 " and make you acknowledge that our
 " swords are of good temper, but our
 " hearts of better, and that you have
 " met with your superiors as much in va-
 " lour as in blood and extraction.

" BAUMARAYS."

Having sent away this letter, he be-
 gan to think of his second, when calling
 to mind that his own younger brother
 La Montagne, a young gentleman of
 about twenty years of age, was brave and
 valiant, and that he had already fought
 two duels, and in both of them came off
 with honour, he sent for him to his closet,
 and there shewing him Champigny's chal-
 lenge, and his answer to it, asked him, if
 he had any stomach to accompany him to
 a banquet of that kind.

Montagne highly applauded his gene-
 rous resolution of accepting the challenge,
 and thanked him for the honour he did
 him in making choice of him for his se-
 cond; protesting, that if he had many
 lives to lose, as he had but one, he would
 willingly hazard them all in his service,
 and in so just a cause, telling him, at the

same time, that he should have taken it
 as a sensible affront, and thought it a dis-
 grace, if he had pitched upon any one
 else to have been his second. So they both
 prepared their horses, swords, and cou-
 rages, against the approaching time, and
 no less did Champigny and Marin.

Baumarays, and his brother Montagne,
 concealed this business from all the world,
 and Champigny carried it so closely, that
 he made not his proud and malicious wife
 acquainted therewith. Tuesday morning
 being come, our four impatient champions
 were in the field at their rendezvous, first
 arrived Champigny and Marin, and pre-
 sently after them Baumarays, and his bro-
 ther Montagne, all of them being well
 mounted. At their first entrance Marin
 went towards Baumarays, thinking to
 make an apology to him for the words he
 had reported, but Baumarays would not
 listen to him, telling him, that it was the
 sword, and not the tongue, that must now
 decide the difference.

So Marin missing his aim, returned
 again to Champigny, and now according
 to the rules of duelling, it was agreed be-
 tween these four desperate combatants,
 that the principals should search the se-
 conds, and the seconds the principals, to
 see that they had no armour under their
 shirts; but they might have spared them-
 selves that labour, for they were all of
 them too generous any way to taint their
 reputations or honours with the least sha-
 dow of cowardice, so casting off their
 doublets, divided themselves, and then
 drew. The first that tried their fortunes
 were Baumarays and Champigny, who
 being at about fourscore paces distance,
 and giving spurs and reins to their horses,
 they shot towards each other like flashes

of

of lightening. At their first encounter Baumarays run Champigny through his shirt-band into the right side of his neck, and Champigny run him into the left shoulder; whereat being reciprocally enflamed like two furious lions, and making short turns with their horses, they fell to it amain with their swords, when again Baumarays gave Champigny two other wounds, and he returned him another in exchange, but neither of them being mortal, they divided again to breathe; which having done, and both of them as yet unsatisfied, they met the second time, when Champigny missing Baumarays, hurt his horse in the neck; at which time Baumarays gave Champigny a wipe across the forehead, which immediately run down with blood, but yet they were too courageous to desist, scorning the number of their wounds.

The third encounter proved as fortunate to Baumarays as fatal to Champigny, for the horse of the latter stumbling on his fore-feet, Baumarays in his bending run him through the body, a little above the left pap, where his sword cutting the strings of his heart, he presently, with a fainting and faltering voice, uttered these words: "Baumarays, I forgive you my death, and God be merciful to my soul;" and then fell down dead from his horse. Baumarays seeing him fall, leaped presently from his horse to his assistance, as did his second Marin; but their charity and care to him were in vain, for life was already departed, and his soul fled to another world. So whilst he was weltring there in his gore, and Marin was covering his breathless body with his cloak, Baumarays sheathed his sword, and with his hands and eyes lifted

up to heaven, rendered thanks to God for his victory.

No sooner had Montagne congratulated his brother Baumarays on his good fortune, but with a heart and courage worthy his noble birth, he called out to his antagonist Marin, to prepare to fight: when his brother earnestly desired to save him from fighting, and notwithstanding his great loss of blood, would have encountered Marin himself rather than he should. But Montagne was too courageous to listen to a motion of that kind, and so with an exalted voice told him, "That he came to fight with Marin, and fight he would:" whereupon his brother Baumarays wishing him success, committed him to his good fortune; and with his cloak muffled about him, sat down a spectator of the combat. Montagne, remounting his steed, called again to Marin to prepare for the fight.

Marin no way appalled or daunted at the misfortune of his principal, but rather the more encouraged, as he was exasperated by it, vowed to make his adversary Montagne pay dearly for it: and so they spurred forward to each other, in such a manner that it was difficult to say whether with most celerity or most courage. At their first encounter Marin run Montagne into the small of the belly, giving him a slight wound, who in exchange cut Marin a great slash in his left cheek, which hung down bleeding exceedingly; when presently closing again, Montagne wounded Marin in the right thigh, and he, in requital, run him into the right arm, and then they separated to take breath; but notwithstanding the many wounds received on each side, they had not yet done enough to satisfy their high spirits; and

presently fell to it again with fresh bravery and resolution: at which time the marquis Bellary, with two lords his sons, and their train, passing that way from Chartres to go to Paris, and seeing these two gentlemen on horseback in their shirts, with their swords drawn, judging what their business was, galloped into the little meadow joining to the vineyard, in order to part them; but they came too late, for Montagne and his antagonist seeing them coming up, set spurs to their horses, and with more haste than good speed, joined a second time, when Montagne putting by a thrust of Marin's, at the same instant ran him through the body, a little below the navel, with which wound he presently fell dead from his horse to the ground, uttering only these words: "O Montagne, thou hast slain me! thou hast slain me! God receive my soul!"

No sooner had Montagne wiped and sheathed his sword, but his brother Baumarays went up to him, and congratulated him upon his victory. And immediately after came up the marquis of Bellary and his sons, who were not a little surprized to see two proper gentlemen lay there slain in the field, and weltering in their own warm blood; then turning to Baumarays and his brother Montagne, with whom they were acquainted, they congratulated them upon their own safety: and the marquis, as briefly as his time and their wounds would permit, enquired of them the cause of their quarrel, and the manner and particulars of the combat, whereof being fully informed, he sent the dead bodies of Champigny and Marin to Chartres in his coach; and understanding that Baumarays and his brother in-

tended for the security of their persons to leave Chartres, and the province of Beausse, and so crossing Normandy to embark at Caen for England, there to remain till their friends had endeavoured to procure the King's pardon for them; and that they were destitute both of surgeons to dress their wounds, and guides to conduct them on their way. He very generously gave them his own surgeon and guide, and promised likewise to labour with the king to the utmost of his power, to make their peace, and so taking his leave, wished them a good journey.

While this noble marquis was travelling towards Paris, and Baumarays and his brother Montagne posting for Caen, let us return to Chartres, which was by this time full of the report and issue of this bloody combat, where gentlemen, citizens, and all, according to their different passions, and affections, spoke and gave their opinion of it; some condemned the vanity of Baumarays, others the folly and treachery of Marin, but all highly extolled the courage and generosity of Champigny and Montagne. As for Blancheville she took the news of her husband's untimely death so tenderly and sorrowfully, that she was ready to drown herself in tears; it was not only a grief to her heart, but almost distraction to her mind, to think that her husband Champigny and his friend Marin, had both lost their lives upon her account, and that by the hands of her mortal enemy and his brother. She was incapable of counsel and would hear of no consolation, her whole thoughts being employed in her malice and revenge towards Baumarays: to answer which she converted most of her corn and wine into money, and going to Paris,

Paris, and casting herself at the king's feet, petitioned the illustrious court of parliament, for justice against the murderer of her husband; nay, her rage was so great, that notwithstanding his body was absent, she spent five hundred crowns in law to have him, according to the custom of France, hanged up in effigy: but although her suit was just, yet he having so great friends at court, she found herself so unfortunate as not to obtain it: whereupon after twelve months stay in Paris to no purpose, and a profuse expence of money, she, with much grief and sorrow returned home, secretly vowing to herself, that if ever Baumarays came back again to Chartres, or which was more, into France, that she herself would be both his judge and executioner, by revenging her husband's death in his, and from this hellish resolution she deeply swore that neither heaven nor earth should divert her.

We must now again bring Baumarays and his brother Montagne on the stage of our history; for the reader is to understand, that their wounds being dressed, and in a way of doing well, they bestowed both their horses on the surgeon and the guide, the two servants of the marquis of Bellary, writing him a letter of thanks for his great civility to them, and likewise beseeching him not to forget their petition to the king for their pardon; they privately, without any followers, embarked on board an English vessel at Caen, and so with a prosperous gale, arrived at Rye, and from thence came to London, where they took up their residence: Baumarays sending to Chartres for two of his footmen, and Montagne for one of his, who coming over to Lon-

don in about six weeks, brought their masters word how earnestly their adversaries prosecuted the rigour of the law against them at Paris.

This notice they received from their servants with much concern, and to prevent the malice of their enemies and their own disgrace, wrote often from London to Paris, to the marquis of Bellary, and the bishop of Chartres their kinsman, to hasten their pardons from the king; upon which that noble lord, and the reverend prelate pitying the danger they were in, and wishing for their safety and return, took time at advantage, and the king, in a well disposed humour, when they represented the matter most favourably to him, acquainting him, that these gentlemen were the challenged, and not the challengers, and were provoked to the combat by their adversaries; that they had formerly received many wounds in his majesty's service, and whenever that called upon them, they were ready to do the same again, having been always loyal subjects to his majesty, and highly esteemed by all who knew them for their bravery, and many other excellent qualities. These motives prevailed so much upon the king, that he ordered their pardon to pass the great seal, and then being registered and confirmed by the court of parliament in Paris, the marquis of Bellary, and the bishop of Chartres, severally wrote to give them an account of their success, and the pardon being sent to the French ambassador in London, was by him delivered to them to their no small joy and content.

Baumarays and Montagne upon this good news, thought of returning to their own country, and so speedily packing

up

up their baggage, left London, and with all celerity posted away to Dover, and from thence to Calais and Paris; where being arrived, the first thing they did was to wait upon the marquis of Bellary and the bishop of Chartres, to give them all possible demonstrations of the grateful sense they had of the favours they had done them; they likewise burned with desire, to testify their acknowledgements to the king, for his mercy to them, which being signified to his majesty by the marquis, and seconded by the bishop, he gave them leave to kiss his hand; who being introduced accordingly, upon their knees, they returned him thanks for his clemency, and begged leave to assure him, that their lives, which his majesty had given them, should always be devoted to his service.

These two brothers, after a short stay at Paris, returned home to Chartres, where their kinsfolks and friends received them with infinite joy, and almost all Chartres, and the gentlemen thereabouts, exceedingly rejoiced at their fortunate and safe return, only the relations of Marin would not easily forgive Montagne; and Blancheville, the incensed widow of Champigny resolved never to be reconciled to Baumarays, whom she disdained to see, and whose name she could not endure to hear mentioned, but she was as firm as ever in her former bloody resolution of putting him to death one way or other, as he had done her husband.

In the former part of this history, we took notice of the affection of La Valley, Baumarays's man, to Martha, Blancheville's chambermaid, which still continued, and while La Valley was contriving all means to bring about his marrying Mar-

tha, so was Blancheville maliciously ruminating with herself how she should murder his master Baumarays.

The reader, for his better information, is to take notice, that in all this time of two years and upwards, since La Valley first saw and spoke with his sweetheart Martha, in his master's house, that there had passed many love tokens between them, but as yet he could not bring her to consent to marry him, for she told him, that she loved her mistress so dearly, that she would not quit her service, nor wed any man without her free consent, which she had now great reason to doubt of, since the lamentable accident which had happened to their two masters.

La Valley seeing that he must win the mistress before he could wed the maid, by Martha's advice waited upon Blancheville, to entreat her consent thereto, which he did in the most earnest and pressing terms. Blancheville had formerly heard something of La Valley's affection to her maid Martha, and being now convinced of it, and observing him to have more passion than judgment, thought this simple man might be a fit agent to execute her bloody purpose upon his master, and that for the love of her maid, he might be brought to poison or pistol him. So being resolved to make trial of him, she gave him some hopes, that she might comply with his request, but told him, she must first talk with her about it, and that if he would come to her again, at the end of the week, she doubted not but she would give him an answer to his satisfaction, or the fault would be his own; but she charged him not to speak one word of this to his master Baumarays; all which La Valley faithfully promised.

He

He went from the mistress to the maid, and reported to her all that Blancheville had said to him, so the young couple flattered themselves that they should be very soon man and wife. Blancheville, whose mind run wholly on her bloody revenge upon Baumarays, no sooner understood that La Valley was gone out of the house, but she sent for her maid Martha into her chamber, where, no way acquainting her with her horrid purpose, she got her to swear that she would never marry La Valley without her consent, and promised her, that in the end she should not repent following her advice. Martha complied with her mistress's request, and swore in the most solemn manner, which was not a little pleasing to this malicious vindictive woman, as she thought it was one ready way to accomplish her horrid design.

At the end of the week away came La Valley to his sweetheart Martha, in hopes of the answer he was so desirous of, and she being taught her lesson perfectly, told him plainly, that she would be his wife upon condition that he gained her mistress's consent, but never without it: this answer was no way disagreeable to La Valley, because he thought himself sure of that, by what she had said to him the last time he was there; so he went forthwith to Blancheville, who impatiently waiting for his coming, received and welcomed him in her closet, with a cheerful countenance; then bolting the door, she told him, it would be impossible for him ever to enjoy or marry her maid Martha, except he first swore to perform a secret business for her, which infinitely concerned her content.

La Valley desired to know what it was, but she first made him swear that he would

keep it a secret, not only from Martha, but all the world, the which he did very readily: after which Blancheville, with hypocritical tears in her eyes, being instructed and prompted by the devil, represented to him how basely his master Baumarays had first wronged her chastity and honour, then abused and prosecuted her husband at law, and afterwards killed him in the field; therefore, she said, she would not only marry her maid Martha, but she would give him three hundred crowns as a marriage portion with her, if he would assist her in doing what she thought but an act of justice, and kill his said master, either by poison, poniard, or pistol, for which service he should have half the money she promised him in hand, and the other half when he had done the business; but if he refused, she swore by all her hopes in this world and the next, that he should never marry her maid, nor even come into her presence.

La Valley was amazed and astonished at this bloody proposition, which she might easily perceive in the distraction and perturbation of his countenance; he told her, that although he loved Martha dearer than his life, yet even for her sake, nor upon any other consideration, could he find in his heart to kill the poorest man in the world, much less so good and so kind a master as Baumarays had been to him. Blancheville, being now as subtle in her malice as she was malicious in her revenge upon Baumarays, shewed La Valley the three hundred crowns in gold, which was a far greater sum than he had ever before a prospect of calling his own; she told him moreover, how great a friend she would always be to him and his wife, and in a word left no lure unpractised to

tempt him to undertake this deplorable and hellish affair. But still finding him as cool as she was hot herself upon the business, she bade him take a week's time to consider of it, then to bring her his last resolution, and withal to remember his oath of secrecy; both which he promised to perform. As he went down stairs from Blancheville, his sweetheart Martha came out to meet him, and to enquire what success he had had with her mistress.

La Valley thought proper at that time to stop her mouth with this pleasing answer, "That he hoped a small time would compass both their desires." So after a few kisses and embraces, they took leave of each other. When he returned home he was very melancholy and pensive, and the more he thought the more he was perplexed in his mind, and the less resolute; he could not yet find in his heart to kill his master, and yet he thought he could die himself rather than lose his dear Martha; true it was, the sight of Blancheville's gold had acted wonders in his heart, and so did the blooming beauty and youthful charms of the lovely Martha; the first tempted him much, the second more, and the devil we may be sure was not failing in his part; but yet he had virtue enough for a while to withstand them all, resolving not to consent to embroil his hands in the innocent blood of his master: but an unexpected accident soon fell out, which unhappily precipitated him on a contrary resolution.

His master Baumarays, knowing how extremely he was hated by Blancheville, had given particular charge to his man La Valley, not to frequent her house, nor any more seek her maid Martha in mar-

riage, both which he very confidently promised to comply with; but his master understanding that he continued still to go there, and was as earnest as ever in his suit to her maid, he called him to him, and giving him five or six boxes of the ear for disobeying him, vowed, that if he evermore had any thing to say either to the maid or mistress, he would utterly cashier him, and not look upon him again. La Valley, not accustomed to receive blows from his master, was so grievously incensed thereat, that they ingendered such bad blood in him as made him strike a bargain, first with his choler, then with the devil, that he would now listen to Blancheville's request, and speedily return his master a sharp and bloody requital for the indignity he had done him; and indeed from that time forward he never viewed him but with hatred and malice.

So without further delay, the same night, as soon as his master was gone to bed, he went away to Blancheville's house, informed her at large of all that had passed, and therefore assured her, that he was now at her service, and ready to execute whatever she proposed, provided she would keep her promise with him, and give him the three hundred crowns, and that also within a month after she would give her consent that he should marry Martha. Blancheville being greatly rejoiced that she had thus secured this wicked instrument of her hellish design, solemnly promised to perform all he desired, and, as a pledge of the rest, immediately paid down the first hundred and fifty crowns, which La Valley joyfully received, but in the end paid very dear for them.

For the method of executing this bloody

bloody business upon Baumarays, Blancheville proposed poison, but La Valley rejected that, as dangerous to be purchased, and more difficult to be applied, and as she disliked to have him stabbed, they both concluded a pistol would be the surest way of giving him his death. Being determined on this, La Valley took leave of his dear Martha, and putting on a cheerful countenance, notwithstanding the rancour of his heart, returned home. The very next day, getting his master's pocket pistol, and loading it with a brace of balls, he waited for a fair opportunity to perpetrate the intended villainy, which offered itself in a very few days. Monsieur Montagne going abroad very early to hawk with his brother's hawks and spaniels, and taking almost all the men servants with him, except La Valley, who was left to wait upon his master; and he being alone, and calling him into the chamber, this wicked and ungrateful servant, finding means to get behind his back, softly drew forth his pistol, and shot him in the reins, upon which he immediately fell down dead to the ground, without uttering one word, or hardly a dying groan.

This bloody and execrable wretch La Valley, seeing his master dead, triumphed in his good fortune in having dispatched him so safely; when to put the better varnish upon his villainy, and to make it appear that his master had been his own murderer, he took the pistol and put it in his dead right hand, laying the key of the chamber upon a table, and the door having a strong spring lock, he pulled and shut it fast after him; then going privately to the stable and taking out a horse, with a hawk on his fist and a spa-

niel at his heels, galloped away to Mons. Montagne, and told him, he was dispatched by his master to him with a fresh hawk, which was his chief and best gos-hawk; he then continued with him all day. La Valley, as he was wont, was very officious and diligent about Montagne, who, towards night returning home to Chartres, brought with him four brace of partridge and a pheasant, part of which he gave to the cook to be dressed for supper, but missing his brother Baumarays, he made enquiry among the servants in the out-houses after him, but they told him they had not seen him all that day.

The cloth being laid, and supper ready, he sent La Valley up to look for his master in his chamber, but he brought word he was not there, the door being fast shut, and having knocked several times at it, without any one's answering him. Montagne wondered at his brother's long and unusual absence, and so did all the servants; but finding his cloak, sword, and belt, hanging on a pin in the hall, they supposed he must be at some neighbour's house not far off; so La Valley was sent one way, and the rest of the servants to other places to seek him.

La Valley, favoured by the night, took this opportunity of slipping to Blancheville, and briefly related to her how successfully he had dispatched his master that morning, who could hardly contain her joy at the news, nor express it in less than a kiss to him; he said he would tell her the rest the next night, and then come and receive the remainder of her promise to him, which she again and again swore she would perform as punctually as he had kept his word with her. La Valley then took leave of her and his

sweet

sweet Martha, and returned home again, as did the rest of the servants, without bringing Montagne any news of his brother. Supper being more than ready, and Montagne not hearing any thing of him, began to doubt much, and fear for his welfare; it run strongly in his mind that he might be asleep in his chamber, therefore he went up with La Valley and another of the servants, who called aloud and beat violently against the door, but receiving no answer, and his fears being redoubled, he commanded them to force and break the door open, but it being exceeding thick, they found it beyond their strength.

Montagne's tender concern for his brother making him by this time out of all patience, he commanded a ladder to be erected against his brother's chamber window towards the garden, which being done, he sent up one of them with a torch to look into it; the servant forcing open the casement, then putting his torch in first, and his head after, very hastily drew it back again, crying out, his master had murdered himself with a pistol, and lay dead on the floor. Montagne at this lamentable news was extremety afflicted with grief, and so were all the servants except La Valley, but he shewed as many or more outward signs of it than any of the rest. One of the lackies being ordered to get in at the window, and open the door, Montagne and all the servants went into the room, where, to their inexpressible sorrow, they saw the mournful spectacle of Baumarays's murdered corpse, with the discharged pistol in his hand. Montagne once thought that his brother might have been robbed and murdered by thieves, but seeing all his trunks fast

locked, then opening his study-door, and finding all his money and jewels in good order, he abandoned that suspicion, believing with the rest, that he had actually murdered himself, so gave the requisite orders for his being interred in a decent but private manner.

The grief and sorrow of Montagne for his brother's untimely death, was not greater than the joy of La Valley, for its having passed off with so little suspicion of the real cause of it; or than that of Blancheville in having thus satisfied her implacable revenge. The next time she saw La Valley, which was the very next night, she faithfully paid his hundred and fifty crowns, and as an additional reward for his having so dextrously dispatched the damnable business she had employed him in, took a diamond ring from her finger, worth a hundred crowns more, and gave him that; and then to make good her oath, she promised that day month he should marry her maid Martha, which he did accordingly to his great joy: but a marriage thus cemented with innocent blood can never prosper. Now Blancheville triumphed in her revenge upon her mortal enemy Baumarays, and La Valley was wrapped up into the third heaven of joy, by the possession of his sweet wife Martha, but neither of them had the conscience or grace to repent of the foul murder they had committed: however when they least dreamt of it, we shall see God did both detect and punish them; for the sorrowful Montagne, having no other witness of his brother's murder, was certainly led into the discovery of it by the divine influence, which brought into his mind the consideration of these four remarkable circumstances.

The

The first was finding Blancheville's letter to his brother Baumarays, which was mentioned before, wherein he observed a wonderful deal of malice towards him; the second was La Valley's sudden marrying of her chambermaid Martha, which made him think he had an intimacy with a family that was unjustifiable, considering what enemies they were to his master; the third was from the fight of the diamond ring, which La Valley wore on his finger, and which had been given him by Blancheville; for Montagne believing he had stole it from his dead master, took him up, and had him challenged for it, by order of law; which La Valley, to clear himself of this supposed theft, was forced to inform both him and the judge that it was given him in marriage with his wife, by the lady Blancheville her mistress; which confession still gave Montagne more suspicion, believing it must be some extraordinary service that should make La Valley deserve so great a reward from her; but the fourth consideration was more prevalent with him than the rest, and wherein the reader may deservedly admire the wonderful justice of God; for the same day two months that Baumarays had been murdered, and that day month that La Valley had married his wife Martha, it pleased the Lord to send him a gangrene in his right hand, which beginning to spread, the surgeons, to save his life, advised the said hand should be forthwith cut off, which was performed accordingly.

This sudden cutting off La Valley's right hand by advice of his surgeons, brought terror to him, fear to Blancheville, and admiration to Montagne, who, led by the immediate spirit and finger of God,

did now confidently believe, that it was that very right hand that shot his brother, as likewise that it was probable, that Blancheville might be the author, as he was the actor of that cruel fact; and grounding this suspicion upon the piety and innocence of his brother's life and disposition, could give no truce to his thoughts, nor rest to his mind, till he had La Valley under examination; so going to the seneschal and king's attorney of that city, he accused La Valley of the murder of his brother Baumarays.

The wise and prudent judges advertised the presidial court hereof, who presently caused him to be apprehended and imprisoned for the same; then charging him with this cruel murder committed on the body of his master, he stoutly denied it with many oaths and imprecations: but his crime being greater than his apology, they adjudged him to the rack, where in the midst of his tortures he confessed, that it was himself who murdered his master Baumarays, by a pistol charged with a brace of bullets, and that he was hired to perpetrate this heinous crime by the lady Blancheville, who gave him three hundred crowns in gold, and a diamond ring, to effect her malicious and bloody purpose. Montagne and his judges could not but exceedingly admire at this confession, and then demanded of him, if his wife Martha was not likewise accessory in the murder; but he positively affirmed the contrary, saying, as he hoped for mercy himself, she was as innocent of it, as he and her mistress Blancheville were guilty.

The judges of the court speedily sent serjeants away to apprehend Blancheville, who was so far from apprehending any

danger near her, that she was playing on her lute, and singing in company with several gentlemen and ladies at her own house: the serjeants seized on her, and acquainted her with the accusation, whereat she was amazed, and wept exceedingly, and so did those that were with her. Being brought before her judges, they strongly accused her of being the author of the cruel murder of Baumarays, and acquainted her with La Valley's full and free confession thereof.

Blancheville, sometimes with tears, and then again with rage and choler, told the judges, that La Valley was a villain, and a monster in nature, thus to accuse an innocent person of so shocking a crime, without any manner of foundation; she said, that she never gave him a ring or three hundred crowns, taking God to witness that she was entirely free from any such guilt. But this poor and passionate apology could not pass upon her wise judges, who caused her to be confronted by La Valley, and though he stood firm to his former accusation against her, yet she was hardy enough still to deny all; but being adjudged to the rack, her dainty and delicate limbs not able to brook such exquisite torture, at the very first wrench she cried out, that she was the author of the murder, and confessed all the particulars of La Valley's deposition against her: the judges then again demanded if her maid Martha was any way accessory with her and La Valley to this bloody fact; but she vowed to them upon the peril of her soul, that she was absolutely ignorant thereof. Upon which Blancheville was loosened from the rack, and brought before the tribunal of justice, and so likewise was La Valley,

where Montagne, and the king's attorney, immediately craved judgment upon them; the president therefore, after a long and pathetick speech, pronounced this sentence, that La Valley, the next day should be broke alive upon the wheel, and Blancheville hanged at the same time, and so they were sent back again to their prison.

The next morning, about ten o'clock, almost all the people of Chartres being gathered about the place of execution, La Valley was first brought upon the scaffold, who, very sad and pensive, said little else but that it was partly Blancheville's gold, though chiefly his love to her maid Martha, now his wife, which first drew him in to murder his dear master Baumarays, of which he said he was heartily repentant and sorrowful, and besought the Lord to pardon his crime: he then protested on the word of a dying man, that his wife Martha was ignorant of every circumstance of the murder, and therefore begged monsieur Montagne to be charitable to her after his death, and likewise prayed his forgiveness for himself: then silently praying a little while, he was immediately dispatched by the executioner.

This being over, Blancheville ascended the ladder, whose youth and beauty drew pity from the hearts, and tears from the eyes of the spectators. In her countenance she was sad and mournful, but yet her vanity was so great, that she came apparelled in a most magnificent attire; and craving leave of the people to speak a few words before she died, with a composed countenance, she told them, that her tender affection to her dear husband Champigny, occasioned her deadly hatred and malice to Baumarays, and that

that as soon as he had slain him in the field, she vowed in revenge to send him to the grave after him; but affirmed, that she was now sorrowful for what she had done, and much grieved to see La Valley die for her service; in requital of which she gave all her apparel, and some of her plate and jewels to his wife Martha, who had been a faithful servant, and whom she affirmed, in the presence of

God and angels, to have been no way guilty, or consenting to the lamentable murder of Baumarays. She then besought Montagne to forgive her, and intreated all who were present to pray for her soul; when, after a few prayers and pious ejaculations, she was turned off. Thus have we seen the triumphs of God's revenge in the just punishment of these two execrable murderers.



GOD's

GOD'S REVENGE

AGAINST

MURDER and ADULTERY.

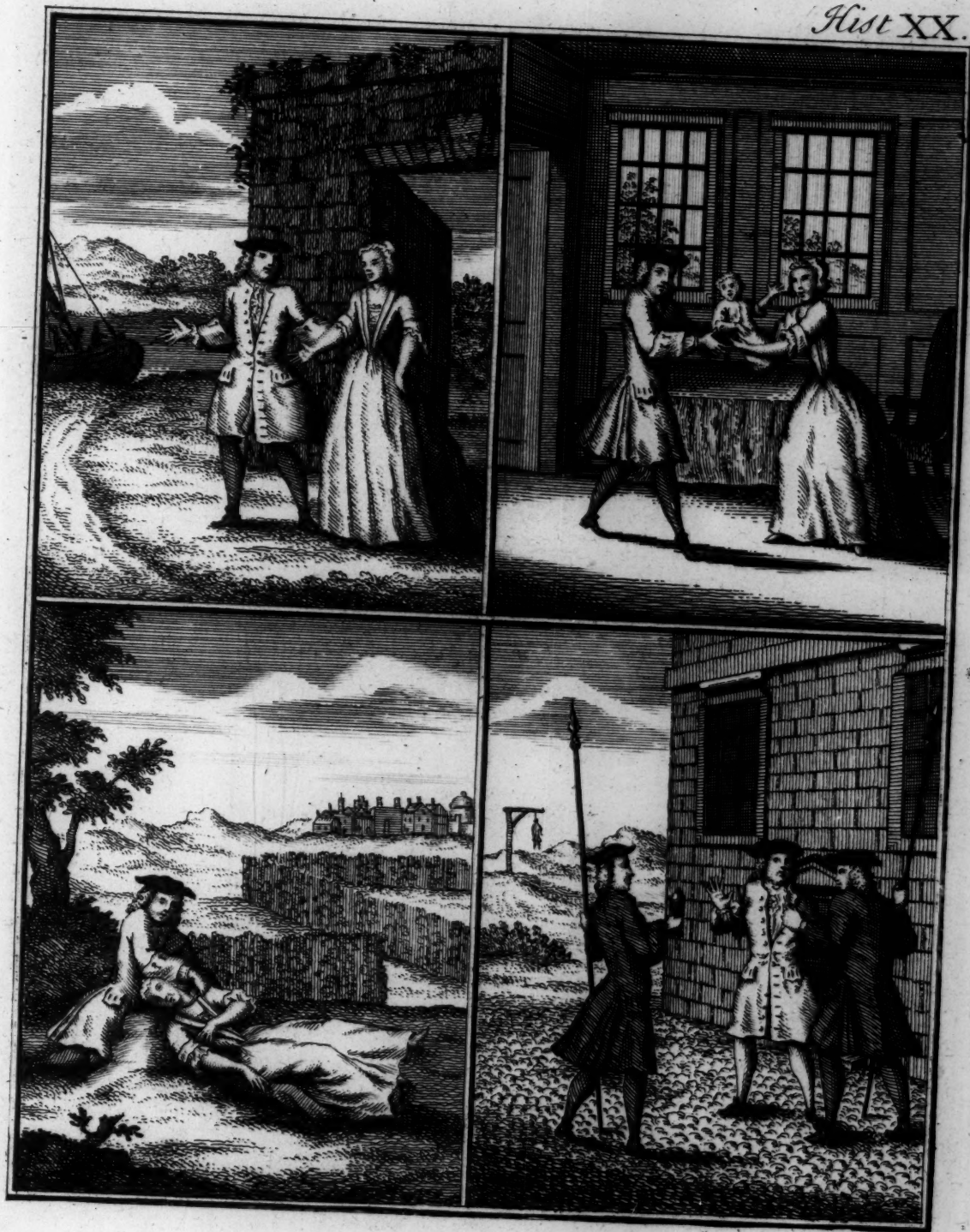
HISTORY XX.

ARGUMENT.

Lorenzo murders his Wife Fermia, and twenty Years after robs his own Son Thomaso, not knowing him, who likewise not knowing his Father, accuses him of the Robbery, for which he is hanged.

IN the city of Genoa, near the arsenal on the quay, there lived a young man, named Andrea Lorenzo, a baker by trade, who being very industrious and provident at his first setting out in the world, grew so rich, that he had the proffer of the daughters of several wealthy bakers, and other artificers of Genoa, in marriage; but he would not yet think of a wife, till going on a certain time to the city of Savona, he there saw and fell in love with the daughter of a rich vintner, named Giovanni Baptista Moron, the girl was called Fermia, about eighteen years of age, and very beautiful, being tall and slender, of a fair complexion, with light

brown hair, and withal was exceeding virtuous and religious, and endowed with many excellent qualities and perfections, which made her sought for in marriage by divers young men of good families in that city, with the worst of whom Lorenzo could not compare, either in estate or extraction, yet she could fancy none but him, and him, above all men in the world, she desired to have for her husband. Lorenzo very fairly acquainted Moron with the love he bore to his daughter, and asked his consent to marry her; but the vintner was too lofty and too purse-proud to think of wedding his daughter to a baker, or to any other mechanic,



10



chanic, and therefore gave him a flat and peremptory denial; which was a great heart-breaking to Lorenzo, because he had before so far insinuated himself in the good opinion of Fermia, that she had consented to marry him, provided he could procure the consent of her father.

Lorenzo therefore resolving not to be put off with the first repulse, renewed his suit to Moron, and, in the most earnest as well as submissive terms, intreated him to grant his request, seeing his daughter was not averse to it, and assuring him that he would endeavour to make her happy if he could not make her great. Fermia likewise herself, with tears in her eyes, begged he would not make her life miserable by joining her to another, since he was the only man she could ever love. All this availed nothing with the haughty temper of Moron, who again rejected with disdain and choler the offers of Lorenzo, and was so far from listening to the intreaties of his daughter, that he vowed he would rather see his daughter in the grave than married so much beneath herself, and that he would himself die rather than consent to it. This answer proved the extream grief of Fermia, and was of infinite Affliction to Lorenzo; but although their bodies were to be separated from each other by the command of Moron, who would not allow his daughter any more to see Lorenzo, who was by himself forbid his house, yet were their hearts too strongly united to be torn asunder, and they had the comfort left of knowing that no one could prevent their thinking of each other, nor without much difficulty intercept the private conveyance of letters to each other; with which only consolation Lorenzo returned

to Genoa, and she continued with her cruel father at Savona.

Old Moron finding his daughter Fermia far more pensive, reserved, and sorrowful than she used to be, was therefore grieved to see her affection so much entangled by this baker, Lorenzo, yet he rejoiced to see, that he came not to Savona, as also to understand that his daughter had no way engaged herself to him by promise of marriage, but on condition of obtaining his free will and consent thereto, which as before, so now again he swore he never would be brought into, or persuaded to grant. And the sooner and better to quash Lorenzo's hopes at once, Moron thought it adviseable to endeavour to provide another lover for his daughter, who might make her a better husband; and, in a short time, he gave her the choice of two or three young men of good families and fortunes in Savona, but she would not have any of them, for her affection was so deeply and firmly settled on Lorenzo, that notwithstanding whatever her father might say, he could hardly prevail upon her to see, much less to give a favourable reception to any one of them, which did not a little enrage him, and made him threaten to renounce her for his daughter, and absolutely to disinherit her, and leave her to beg, if she continued in her disobedience; and then went from her with great wrath in his countenance.

Lorenzo had made several private journeys to Savona to see his dear Fermia, and many letters had passed secretly between them, besides which they had employed several of their friends to mollify old Moron, but all to no purpose. Three years being now spent in vain expecta-

tions of bringing him to a compliance, Lorenzo, considering that he had used all the lawful means in his power, and to no purpose, resolved to use his best persuasions with Fermia, to prevail upon her, notwithstanding her father's refusal, to consent to marry him, and leave Savona privately in the night, and come to live and die with him in Genoa, telling her, that although he could not then expect any marriage portion with her, yet as it had pleased God to give him sufficient means to maintain her and his family in plenty, she should find no want of that or any thing else, if she would yield to his request, and that he would tender her as the apple of his eye, and be as careful of her as of his own life.

Thus by a world of sweet words and promises, this fair young virgin, contrary to her former wholesome and obedient resolution, was tempted away by him, and made forgetful of the duty she owed her parent, by taking her flight with Lorenzo, who had provided a small frigate with four oars, to be ready at the dead time of the night, at the quay of Savona, to bear her from thence when her father and all his servants were asleep, and she had an opportunity of escaping to him by the garden door, where he was ready to receive and conduct her to the bark he had provided for that purpose. The next morning early they arrived at Genoa, when he led her to St. Saviour's church, and was there married.

While the young couple were celebrating their nuptials at Genoa with joy and delight, old Moron was grieving and storming in Savona, for the loss of his daughter, and guessing which way she was gone, he sent to make an enquiry

after her, and was soon informed of her being married to Lorenzo; he told all who came near him, that she should never touch or enjoy a single ducatoon of all his estate and wealth, as long as she lived, and that he would never see her more, or send after her; which sharp and bitter vow he too severely and bitterly kept.

About ten days after their marriage, Lorenzo and Fermia, when the joy of wedlock were cool enough to give them time to think of other affairs, judged it might be proper to write to Maron, and beg pardon for the offence they had committed, when it was agreed that Fermia should write a letter to her father, and that Lorenzo should go over to Savona with it, that he might himself have an opportunity of labouring with him for a reconciliation. The letter was as follows:

FERMIA to MORON.

" SIR,

" **A** Lthough the cause and manner
 " of my departure from your house
 " and you make me more worthy of
 " your indignation than of your pardon,
 " yet when you shall please to remember, that you are my father and I your
 " only child, and that God and his holy
 " church hath made Lorenzo my husband,
 " and that also for the term of three
 " whole years, with prayers and tears I
 " came many times prostrate to you on
 " my bended knees, to obtain your con-
 " sent thereunto, then I hope you will
 " excuse at least, if not wholly forget and
 " pardon this error; or if these reasons
 " are not powerful enough to intercede
 " for me, I must humbly beseech you far-
 " ther to consider, that herein I have
 " neither

“ blemished nor disgraced my reputa-
 “ tion with any point of dishonour; for
 “ as I came to my husband’s bed a pure
 “ virgin, so I will live and die with him a
 “ chaste wife: and that as this clandestine
 “ flight and marriage was the first, so it
 “ shall be the last act of my disobedi-
 “ ence towards you. Some small por-
 “ tion of your wealth at our first setting
 “ out together in the world, would do
 “ my husband and myself a great deal
 “ of service in trade: but this I leave to
 “ your consideration, only with all hu-
 “ mility and duty I intreat your blessing,
 “ and implore your prayers to God for
 “ me, which I hope both religion and
 “ nature will prevail upon you not to
 “ refuse me. My husband will second
 “ this letter, and his promises and virtue
 “ assure me, that in his respects and
 “ service to you, he will ever be found as
 “ much your servant as son-in-law. That
 “ the great God may at all times prosper
 “ your age with health, and bless your
 “ health with prosperity, is the most
 “ sincere and ardent prayer of your ever,
 “ but once

“ Most dutiful

“ and obedient daughter,

“ FERMIA.”

After Lorenzo was arrived at Savona, he thought it most advisable to send the letter by another hand, before he himself waited on Moron, who understanding by the messenger that it came from his daughter at Genoa, he was at first doubtful whether he should read it, or throw it into the fire at once; but taking a turn or two in his parlour, he made truce with his choler long enough to run it over, then tearing

it to pieces, he bade the messenger tell the slut he brought it from, “ That her
 “ carriage had been so base, disobedient,
 “ and ungrateful to him, that he dis-
 “ dained to return her any answer to her
 “ letter, and was very sorry that he had
 “ so much descended from himself as to
 “ have received and read it.” When with-
 out once enquiring of him how his daugh-
 ter did, or giving him any reward, or so
 much as asking him to drink, he hastily
 flung from him, and never said another
 word: Lorenzo was somewhat startled
 when he received this account of his fa-
 ther-in-law’s behaviour; however, the
 next morning, he went to his house, very
 well dressed, and enquired for him of his
 servants, who told him he was in his
 chamber; but when they came to acquaint
 old Moron with Lorenzo’s being there,
 he started up on a sudden, and flatly
 charged his servants to deny his being
 at home, and that as soon as Lorenzo
 was gone out, they should shut the doors
 against him, and at no rate suffer him to
 come into his house, for that he was re-
 solved never to see or speak to him.
 Lorenzo could not help hanging his lip,
 when the servants brought him word his
 father-in-law was gone out almost in the
 same breath that they had told him he
 was at home, but holding it discreet to
 depart for that time, and so going to his
 inn, got his supper, and then returned to
 see if old Moron was come home yet,
 but still met with the same answer as be-
 fore, which made him suspect the truth,
 that Moron was within, but not to him;
 so returning to his lodging with much
 discontent, he betook himself to his bed;
 but this discourtesy of his father-in-law
 would not permit him to take much
 rest

rest, his numbers being frequently interrupted by the thoughts of this unkindness. The next morning very early he went to Moron's again, to try if he could have better success, but his answer was the same as the last, whereat being highly nettled, he called for his horse, and posted away to Genoa.

Being returned to his wife Fermia, he truly and faithfully related to her this discourteous treatment of her father, from point to point, which she, poor unhappy young woman, was exceedingly grieved at, but knew not how to remedy. However they comforted each other with the hopes that a little time would make him more tractable, and that nature would begin to awake in his breast; so they still continued to live cheerfully, he proving a courteous and loving husband to her, and she a kind and dutiful wife to him, he exceeding provident to get and thrive by his trade, and she as careful in her house and family to save what he got; and so for six months they neither went nor sent to Moron; at the end of which time Lorenzo prayed his wife Fermia to ride over to Savona, to see what alteration might be wrought in her father's affection. Fermia, in obedience to her husband, undertook the journey, but still dreaded that she should find her father, whose temper she was too well acquainted with, the same man in his discontent and displeasure towards them; and so it happened, for when she came to Savona, she met with the same treatment in all respects that her husband Lorenzo had done before, her father not vouchsafing to see or speak with her, nor permitting her either to lie, eat, or drink in his house; but was extremely

enraged with his servants, for suffering her to see her aunt Alcina, his own sister, and with her for giving her any countenance.

Our sweet Fermia could not but be greatly afflicted and grieved at this her father's bitter unkindness and cruelty towards her, which she expressed by whole rivulets of tears, which trickled down her blooming cheeks like so many drops of pearly dew upon the blushing damask rose; but as soon as he had made a little truce with her sorrow, she again applied to her aunt Alcina, and likewise intreated Bernardo de Monte, old Moron's ghostly father, to persuade her in her behalf, which according to promise they performed; but at last seeing the earnest solicitations of one bootless, and the spiritual exhortations of the other vain and of no effect, she was forced to return to Genoa, with infinite grief and despair, where, with tears in her eyes, she related to her husband Lorenzo all that had passed, and with how much unnatural discourtesy her cruel father had treated her: whereat, as before, he again dissembled his discontent, and with many sweet speeches and some kisses, sought to comfort and pacify her; but still the remembrance thereof stuck deep in his mind; and to add to his discontent, the knowledge of his father-in-law, old Moron's discourtesy first offered to himself, and then to his wife in Savona, being known, and reported to some of his neighbours and acquaintance in Genoa, they scoffed and taunted at his foolish ambition, in marrying and stealing away his wife, and in all companies which he frequented, they gave him this sharp wiper, "That it
" would have been far wiser and better
" for

“ for him to have married a poor tradesman’s daughter in Genoa, with a small portion, than a rich vintner’s daughter “ at Savona with nothing :” which foolish and malicious reflection of theirs fell not so easily from his memory as from their tongues, but left too deep an impression there : the consequences of which were, that from henceforth Lorenzo from a prudent man grew a fool, from an honest man a knave, and from a good christian to God, an extreme wicked man to himself, and very bad husband to his wife : for now seeing the mountains of his hopes in a rich wife turned to mole-hills, and those vanished to nothing, through the inflexible temper of her father, he began to look upon her with less respect than formerly, and shewed her less kindness ; while she, poor harmless young woman, knew better how to lament and grieve for her misfortunes than how to prevent them : and occasion enough she had to lament and grieve, for before a whole year was expired, he so far neglected both himself and her, that he, who formerly would pray at home in his own family, and was a constant frequenter of the public worship of God, now scorned the church, and abandoning the care of his wife and family, fell into all manner of debauched and vicious company, spending his time and fortune among panders, bawds, and strumpets, from which ungodly life neither the prayers, nor modest persuasions of his wife could reclaim him ; so that in a short time, letting all things go at random, without care or consideration, his trade fell off, his credit was cracked, his reputation lost, his estate spent, and nothing left but despair and misery.

Poor Fermia prevailed upon all his best friends, and the most sober and virtuous part of his acquaintance, to endeavour to dissuade him from his vicious course of life ; she likewise, though with much regret, acquainted his confessor therewith, who, taking a proper time, talked roundly to him concerning the reformation of his life, and failed not to paint out his sins and vices, as also their deserved punishment in the most frightful colours : but still Lorenzo was so strongly linked to the devil, and so firmly wedded to his beastly enormities, that all the world could not divert him from them ; nay, he was adding daily new crimes to the old, for he now took an impious delight in cursing and swearing, and all his speeches were larded with desperate oaths and execrations.

He also now began to revile his wife, treating her with very abusive language, calling her beggar, and her father a villain, saying, he was bound to curse them both, for they had beggared him ; when God and his own sinful conscience well knew, that there was nothing more false, for if his care and providence had equalled hers, they might still have been in a flourishing condition, and her father, obstinate as he was at present, might in time have relented, and bestowed some portion upon them, whereas now the knowledge of his lascivious and prodigal life did justly increase his hatred to him.

At this time a fresh misfortune came upon our sorrowful Fermia, which indeed would have been a blessing, had she been in other circumstances, and that was to find herself quick with child ; for as her husband’s vices had scarce left her any thing to maintain herself, she knew

not how she should be able to support the poor infant, when at God's appointed time it should be brought into the world. Under all these distresses she knew not what to do, one while she had a mind to go to Savona, and prostrating herself at her father's feet, to implore him to receive her again, but then considering his flinty heart, and above all her marriage vow to her husband, wherein she had promised to cherish him in sickness and health, and had taken him for better or worse, she laid aside that thought, believing her husband could never want her advice and assistance more than at present: however being desirous to draw hope and comfort from any spring, she resolved to write once more to her father, to acquaint him with her calamitous condition, and earnestly and humbly to intreat some relief from him, which she did by the following sorrowful letter, which she got delivered safely into his hands at Savona.

FERMIA to MORON.

"Honoured SIR,

"**I** Now find to my grief, and know to my shame and repentance, that my disobedience in marrying Lorenzo against your consent, and without your blessing, is the reason why God hath punished me with a bad husband, whose once fervent affection is now quite frozen up and forgotten, and whose own virtues are so sudden and sinfully changed into vices, that, by his riots and prodigality he hath consumed all his estate, and hath not left enough either to maintain himself or me: in compassion whereof, as my afflictions are so great, and my miseries so infinite, let me entreat you, if

"not for my sake, who am your living daughter, yet in remembrance of my dear mother, your dead wife, either to give my husband means to set up his old trade, and forsake his new vices in Genoa, or else to take me home to live with you again in Savona; and if my offence has determined you to look upon me no more as your daughter, I hope you may have pity enough to entertain me as your menial servant.

"I most humbly beseech you to consider with yourself, to what great straits and necessities I am reduced, since this letter is stained as much with my tears as with ink. The great God direct your heart to my relief and comfort, as mine is always devoted to your service, and consecrated to his glory.

"FERMIA."

Moron, her father, after long debating with himself whether he should accept and read her letter or not, broke open the seal, and certainly if he had had any spark of good nature or humanity left, the account he had received before, and now this confirmation of the miserable condition she was in, would have inclined him to have granted her, if not her first, at least her second request, which was only to receive her, and give her maintenance: but he was still so hard-hearted, that he would neither relieve her wants, nor pity them, and to assure her of it, returned the following answer to her letter:

MORON to FERMIA.

"**I**F your husband proves not to your liking, you have nobody to blame for it but yourself, and have just reason to condemn your own temerity and
"disobe-

“ disobedience in chusing him; and if
“ his affection be so soon frozen and
“ forgotten to you, it seems you are paid
“ in your own coin, for your affection
“ was first so to me. The fruits of chil-
“ drens disobedience to their parents are
“ shame and repentance.

“ If your husband, by his vices and
“ prodigality, has spent all his estate,
“ though you may have so little sense
“ as to imagine it, yet I hope I have more
“ understanding than to let him spend
“ any part of mine; for that would be
“ to imitate and second him in his folly,
“ and consequently to make myself guilty
“ of my own ruin. And because you
“ fled with him without my knowledge
“ from Savona to Genoa, and did there
“ marry him without my consent, there-
“ fore it is neither your grief nor misery,
“ or your shame and repentance, which
“ shall induce me either to respect or
“ pity you as my daughter, or which is
“ less, to relieve and entertain you as my
“ menial servant: you both are young
“ enough to work and labour for your
“ living, as your mother and myself did
“ for ours, and therefore know your
“ youth deserves no compassion from my
“ age; and if this will not satisfy you,
“ then the best advice and counsel, which
“ I can or will give you, is, that you
“ continually direct your prayers to God
“ for your relief and consolation; and
“ herein you will then serve yourself,
“ please me, and glorify him: and as
“ you regard my commands, or desire
“ my blessing, let me neither see you,
“ nor hereafter hear any more of your
“ vain and foolish letters.

“ MORON.”

The receipt of this cruel letter from her father was a very great affliction to Fermia, and was greatly heightened by the barbarous usage of her husband, who treated her with the utmost inhumanity, often beating her, and abusing her in the vilest manner; yet she, poor wretch! endeavoured, in the gentlest terms, to exhort him to leave his wicked course of life, prostrating herself at his feet, with showers of tears in her eyes, but all in vain; for he was deaf to her requests, and blind to every attitude of her distress, which must have moved pity in any, but the most flinty breast. He had now no money left to purchase the materials of his trade, and instead of selling bread to others, had not any left to eat himself; as for his servants, he was forced to put them all away, and when he wanted money to support his idle expences, with threats and stripes he demanded it from his wife, who to fill up the measure of her woes, was brought to-bed of an helpless infant, that she had no means to cherish, and nothing but rags to cover, so that she was now reduced with grief and shame to beg poor linnen clouts from her neighbours; and had not their charity and kindness for her been greater than her husband's, both mother and her child must have perished at the time of her delivery. The babe, a fine boy, was baptized in a mean manner by the name of Thomaso, but was little regarded by the worthless father; when it was waking, she often looked upon it, and kissed it with joy, but when it slept or suckled, then she grieved that it was so unfortunate in a bad father, and a poor disconsolate mother, who had more means to lament and pity, than milk to feed and nourish it.

She

She often shewed her husband his child, and importunately begged him henceforth to have a more provident care of himself for his child's, if not for her, or his own sake : but he, profligate wretch, had neither love nor care for either of them, but used her with such barbarity, that she thought her life a burden to her, and wished a thousand times she was in another world; and one time among the rest, after her husband without any cause had given her many words and some sharp blows, her child being in its cradle, and he gone out, she fell down on her knees to implore the Almighty to relieve her in her distressed condition : after which she was over-heard by one of her neighbours in the following soliloquy :

“ Ah, poor Fermia! how happy
 “ wouldst thou have been hadst thou never
 “ seen Lorenzo, or hadst thou perished
 “ in the sea when thou fledst with him
 “ from Savona to Genoa, before he was
 “ thy husband, for surely thou hast great
 “ cause to think, and reason to believe,
 “ that this cruelty of his towards thee, is
 “ a just punishment sent from God for
 “ disobeying thy father, in marrying
 “ without his consent and blessing, with
 “ whom, when thou lived single, thou
 “ knew no sorrow, as now thou canst
 “ taste no felicity : then didst thou surfeit
 “ as it were on the choicest food, but now
 “ art ready to starve merely for the want
 “ of bread : then was thy apparel rich,
 “ but now thou art cloathed in rags : then
 “ was thy beauty sought for by divers in
 “ marriage, but now thy griefs and sor-
 “ rows have not only defaced that, but
 “ thou art despised even by the person
 “ who pretended the greatest regard for

“ it. Where can thy sorrows be matched,
 “ or what can parallel the baseness of thy
 “ husband, who neither serves God, nor
 “ will regard himself or family? Wretch-
 “ ed young woman! Oh, that thou hadst
 “ been unborn or unmarried! Thy mo-
 “ ther, who loved thee, died long since,
 “ so cannot, and thy father who lives,
 “ will not assist or relieve thee; all thy
 “ kinsfolks refuse to lend, or send thee
 “ any comfort in thy calamities, and those
 “ who professed themselves thy friends in
 “ thy prosperity will now take no notice
 “ of thy poverty, unless it be to shew
 “ their disdain and contempt.”

Then looking on her pretty babe, and giving it many tender kisses, which were constantly mixed with sighs and tears,
 “ What shall I do, said she, my sweet
 “ babe for you? I that have no food for
 “ myself, how can I find milk for you?
 “ Yet will I cheerfully work, or even beg
 “ to get sustenance and necessaries for the
 “ preservation of your life, but if I die
 “ before you, as I hope I shall not live
 “ long, I will leave you my blessing, and
 “ heir to my devout and most religious
 “ prayers.”

Scarce had she finished this mournful speech, before her husband entered the room, and with his usual brutality, both abused her and spurned at the harmless infant, which she offered to him in hopes of making peace between them, and finding she had no money to supply his extravagance, he quitted her again, with very reproachful language; but some few days after, when she had acquired some small matter by working exceeding hard with her needle, this cruel husband forced away at least two thirds of it from her,
 which

which reduced her, secretly in remote streets and churches, to beg the alms and charity of well-disposed people, for the sustenance of her and her child; but at length when she found her husband was informed thereof, and was so inhuman as to come likewise to take these small sums of money from her, not knowing what else to do, she resolved to write once more to her father to take her child home to Savona, and maintain that, though he would have nothing to say to herself, and then sent a letter with the following humble language and petition:

FERMIA to MORON.

“THE increase of my husband’s
“vices is so to my wants and
“miseries, which are now grown so
“extream and infinite, that I have not
“cloaths to cover, nor food to sustain
“myself and poor infant; considering
“then that I am your daughter and only
“child, methinks both nature and christianity should incline you to have compassion enough not to see me driven to these sharp and bitter extremities, without affording me some relief, especially as I have formerly begged it, as I do now, with all humility for God’s sake; but if your heart will not relent nor shew any compassion to your daughter, at least let your young grandson Thomaso, my dear child, taste some small share of it: save the harmless babe, I beseech you, from the jaws of death, for he has never yet offended you, whatever his sorrowful mother has. God will requite this your charity to him, and I shall therefore the sooner forget your unkindness to

me. I sincerely wish that you may live in as much prosperity, as I fear I shall die shortly in extream indigence and misery.

“FERMIA.”

Her father Moron received this third letter, but was not yet moved with any compassion towards her, however, having some pity for her young son, he sent her the following short answer:

MORON to FERMIA.

“I See that you are still obstinate in
“disobeying my commands, and will
“pester me with your letters, wherein
“I believe you take more pleasure than
“I conceive grief at the relation of any
“of your wants or misfortunes, which I
“am so far from relieving, that I do not
“pity them. And yet because your son
“Thomaso is as innocent of the cause
“of my displeasure, as you are guilty,
“if you will give him to the bearer,
“whom I have sent purposely to receive
“him of you, I will try whether it shall
“please God that he in time may as
“much deserve my favour, as you are
“unworthy of it.

“MORON.”

Our poor disconsolate Fermia having read this letter from her father, although she was wonderful sorrowful for his persevering in his cruelty to herself, yet she could not but rejoice to find that he had some compassion for her young-son, whom, apparelling in the very best manner she could, which God knows was mean and ragged enough, with a thousand sighs, tears, and prayers, kisses and blessings,

she delivered to her father's messenger, religiously recommending him to the gracious protection and preservation of the Almighty God; but it was a new affliction to her to see that her husband Lorenzo could not be persuaded to give the child his blessing, or one kiss, or even to take the least notice of it at its departure;—a most unnatural part in a father to so sweet and lovely a child!

Our sorrowful Fermia having thus sent away her little son Thomaso to Moron at Savona, the very same night dreamed that she never should be so happy as to see him again, and being awaked, she could not put the thoughts of this sorrowful dream out of her mind, but weeping bitterly at the remembrance of it, grew very mournful and melancholy. In the mean time, her husband growing from bad to worse, her cohabitation with him was worse than a state of Egyptian bondage.

Five years she lived in this miserable poverty with her husband; and in all that time could never once persuade her hard-hearted father to take the least notice of her; nor had she any consolation left her but prayers, nor any remedy but enforced patience. She was contented to beg for the maintenance of her little son Thomaso, but being now eased of that burden, she worked hard with her needle for a very poor living, yet part of what she so earned, her base husband forced from her, to spend in idleness and debauchery.

Lorenzo at this time having scarce a rag left to cover his nakedness, entered into a compact with the devil, to become more his servant than ever, for thinking with himself, that if he could once get

rid of his wife Fermia, he might marry some other with a good portion to maintain him, and again set up his trade of baking, which had forsaken him because he had idly and foolishly forsaken it; therefore he assumed a bloody and damnable resolution to murder her, which the better to put in execution, he took her out with him on a holliday, to a vineyard about half a mile from the city of Genoa, under pretence of recreating themselves and taking the air; which she, poor soul, looking upon as a great, because an unaccustomed favour at his hands, very willingly and joyfully accompanied him.

After they had been some time in the vineyard, the weather being warm, they laid themselves down in a shady place, where he pretended to fall asleep, and she really did so, which he perceiving, arose up softly, and according to his premeditated design, cut her throat from ear to ear; then leaving her weltering in her own gore, he returned to Genoa, which he entered by a contrary gate, to avoid suspicion of the bloody and damnable fact he had just then perpetrated.

The very same night the body was found by some persons of Genoa, who accidentally walked that way, and they caused it to be brought to the city, where it was presently known to be that of Fermia, the wife of Lorenzo, who, the better to cloak his villainy, seemed wonderfully affected at the sight of it, and immediately requested the criminal officers in and about the city to make diligent enquiry after the murderers, which they did accordingly, but all to no purpose, as they had not any suspicion of him. Her old father Moron was soon made acquainted with the deplorable death of his daughter,

daughter, which though he seemed outwardly to lament, yet was his aversion so settled against her for throwing herself away upon so bad a husband, that he was in reality very little concerned at it.

About a month after the cruel murder of this virtuous young woman, her execrable husband Lorenzo had the assurance to go to Savona, to try once again if he could prevail upon old Moron to allow him something towards his maintenance, as he had not received any portion with his daughter in marriage; and likewise on a pretence of seeing his little son Thomaso. But Moron, by his servants, sent him a peremptory refusal to both his requests, and would neither see him, nor suffer him to see his son, but absolutely and positively forbid him ever to come to his house, upon which Lorenzo, in great choler, returned to Genoa, where selling his wife's old cloaths to furnish him with new, he made courtship to several maids and widows, to procure him a second wife, but the fame of his life, and scandalous behaviour to his first was so well known, that all of them rejected him with scorn.

Utterly despairing of ever raising himself by marriage, he forsook Genoa, and inrolling himself among the banditti, for many years together practised their thieving profession; to which we shall leave him for a while, and speak of his young son Thomaso.

Old Moron trained up his grandchild Thomaso very virtuously and industriously, and at the age of fourteen bade him chuse what trade he liked; when Thomaso, exceedingly delighting in engraving, chasing, and other works of that kind in gold and silver, made choice

of the trade of a goldsmith, and in about five years time became a singularly expert workman in his business. His grandfather loved him tenderly, and intended making him his heir, but Thomaso being of a roving humour, and desirous to see other countries and cities, especially that of Rome, which he heard was the chief place in the world for curiosities in his trade, and meeting with a ship at Marseilles bound for Civita Vecchia, he went up to Hostia by sea, and then on the river Tyber to Rome, where he met with business, and thrived so well, that in a few years he set up a shop for himself, making the city of Rome his constant residence. His grandfather Moron was however very much grieved at his rash and sudden departure, but knew not how to remedy it; but he had the comfort to hear of his doing well, and to receive several respectful and dutiful letters from him.

In all this long tract of time, which was about twenty-four years, Lorenzo had continued one of the thieving banditti, in the state of Genoa and Lucca, but at length had committed so many vile robberies, that the country grew too hot for him, therefore he went to Florence, the capital of Tuscany, and with the money he had acquired by his infamous calling, he set up his original trade of a baker, in which profession he knew himself to be well skilled. Having taken a commodious house, he looked out again for some rich maiden or widow to court for a wife, but we shall find that his designs herein were frustrated by God, with whom he had not as yet endeavoured to make his peace, nor repented of the iniquities of his past life.

At this time, Charles, cardinal of Medicis,

Medicis, going to Rome to receive his hat of pope Urban VIII. and Cosmos, the great duke of Florence his brother, in honour to him and their illustrious blood and family, whereof they were now the chief, resolving to make his entry and abode in the city of Rome as stately and magnificent as possible, caused his house and train to be composed of double the usual number of officers and servants, to whom he gave rich and costly liveries, and among others, our Lorenzo was found out, and made choice of one of the bakers for his own table, and this prodigal wretch, as soon as he came to Rome, flaunted it about in richer apparel, and was far more lavish in his expences, and a great deal more debauched than any of the rest of the duke's or cardinal's menial servants, having no remorse of conscience for the murder of his innocent wife, as if he absolutely thought that God had wholly buried that horrid fact in oblivion, as he had endeavoured to do himself; but herein we shall find him deceived in the end.

This prodigal Lorenzo having now spent all his money, and stretched his credit to support his debaucheries in Rome, was yet unwilling to give them over; but cast about how to get money at any rate, rather than forego what he foolishly mistook for pleasures. At first he thought to steal some gold out of the argentiers or paymaster's chest; but then considering the danger, ingratitude, and infamy of such an attempt, he buried that resolution as soon as it was born, and then gave life to another, which was to steal some pieces of plate out of the shop of a young goldsmith, with whom he was familiarly acquainted, and whose shop

and company he often frequented with several others, since his coming to Rome: having taken this resolution, and a convenient opportunity soon offering, he took away two rich gilt chalices, and a curious small gilt crucifix set with sapphires and emeralds, all amounting to the value of four hundred and fifty ducatoons.

The young goldsmith, whose name we shall know anon, was amazed at this great loss, when being guided and directed by the immediate finger of God, he presently suspected Lorenzo, the cardinal of Florence's baker, to be the person who had committed this robbery, having observed him too curiously prying about his shop; whereupon well knowing that he lay not in the cardinal's palace, which, as all others, are privileged sanctuaries, but in a taylor's house near adjoining, he, with a proper officer, went and searched his chamber, and in a trunk found one of his chalices, but not the other, or the gold crucifix, for those Lorenzo had sold to put money in his pocket, for his lewd expences. The goldsmith going in quest of the thief Lorenzo, presently found him, and had him committed to prison, then accused him to the captain and judges of Rome, who, upon hearing the affair, and on seeing one of the chalices found in Lorenzo's trunk, and on his own confession of having sold the other, with the gold crucifix, they condemned him to be hanged the next day for the robbery. Lorenzo bitterly weeping for this disaster, did most humbly sue and petition the lord cardinal and the duke his master, to beg his life of the pope; but they thinking it a disgrace to themselves to have a servant in their family guilty of such a fact, were deaf to his requests; whereupon he

he was returned that night to his prison, and the next morning, according to his sentence, he was brought forth to the common place of execution, at the bridge-foot, near the castle of St. Angelo, where great numbers of people flocked together from all parts of Rome, to see the duke of Florence's baker take his leave of the world. Lorenzo having been prepared for his death the night before by a holy friar, when he ascended the ladder, he there confessed the robbery for which he then suffered, and likewise owned that about twenty-three years before he had murdered his own wife, the daughter of Baptista Moron, a vintner at Savona, in a vineyard near Genoa; of which murder, for his foul's sake, he made this ample confession. The young goldsmith as soon as he heard the name of Moron, burst forth into tears, and very passionately cried out, that the man on the ladder was his own father; therefore with many sighs and tears he intreated the officers to stop the execution for a small time, that he might speak with the prisoner, which request was very readily granted him, and Lorenzo suffered to descend the ladder for a short space, when Thomaso, the young goldsmith, throwing himself at his feet, all drowned in tears, confessed himself to be his son, Fermia Moron having been his mother, and therefore begged forgiveness for having, through ignorance of the relation there was between them, thus prosecuted him to his death; and although the considera-

tion of his mother's death pierced him to the heart with grief, yet knowing him to be his father, he freely offered the captains and judges of Rome all his estate to save his life; but the robbery was so foul, and the murder of his wife so execrable and inhuman, that no one would speak in his behalf, and the executioner was ordered immediately to do his office: so the father and son reciprocally asking forgiveness of each other, Lorenzo was turned off, cursing with his last breath the name and memory of his father-in-law Moron, whose unkindness and cruelty he said was the cause of all his misfortunes.

The common sort of people in Rome seemed to condemn the duke of Florence for not saving his baker's life; but the wiser and more religious applauded his generosity in not asking such a favour of the pope, but leaving him to the deserved punishment of the law.

All admired God's sacred providence and divine justice in making the son the instrument of punishing the father for the murder of his mother, which was the subject of discourse at Rome, Genoa, Savona, and even throughout all Italy.

Thus ended the wicked life of that bloody villain Lorenzo, whose execution seemed too disgraceful for the son to continue at Rome, where it happened; he therefore returned to Savona, where he was kindly received by his grandfather Moron, who at his death made him sole heir to all his estate and riches.

GOD'S REVENGE

AGAINST

MURDER and ADULTERY.

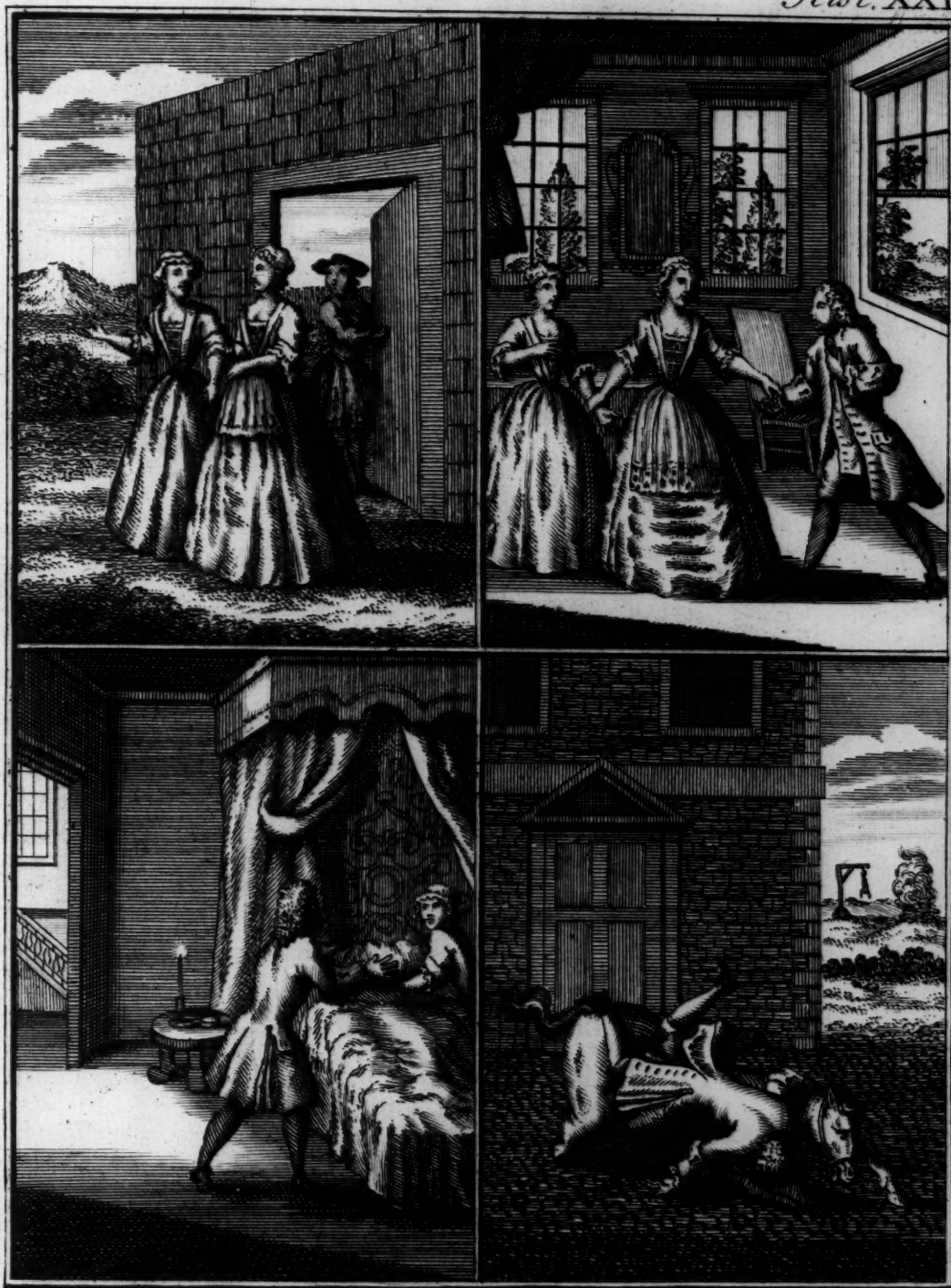
HISTORY XXI.

ARGUMENT.

Baptistina and Amarantha poison their eldest Sister Jaquinta; after which Amarantha causeth her Servants Bernardo and Pieria to stifle her Sister Baptistina in Bed. Bernardo flying, breaks his Neck with the Fall of his Horse. Pieria is hanged, so likewise is Amarantha, and her Body afterwards burnt. Bernardo being buried, his Body is taken up, and hanged to the Gallows by his Feet, then burnt, and his Ashes thrown into the Air.

IN the city of Florence, near the church of the Dominican friars, at the latter end of the reign of the great duke Ferdinand, there dwelt an ancient and honourable cavalier, named signor Leonardo Streni, descended from a noble family near the city of Pistoia, where he had a large estate, which he had no son to inherit; but his lady being dead was left with three daughters, named Jaquinta, Baptistina, and Amarantha, who he expected would have been

the stays and comforts of his old age, but alas! it fell out quite the contrary. The two youngest daughters Baptistina and Amarantha, were wonderful fair and beautiful, of an exceeding good stature, stait and slender; but Jaquinta the eldest daughter was of a brown complexion, short and ill-favoured in shape, which last defect she very much disguised by the art of her mantua-maker; and as to her complexion, she knew how to make herself a new one every day, by the help of unnatural





unnatural paint, a vice which the simplicity of former ages was unacquainted with, or purposely disdained, but which the pride and vanity of these times do often put in practice. Jaquinta was proud and stately, Baptistina choleric, fullen, and revengeful, and Amarantha, to the eye of the world, pleasant and courteous. Let the reader have but a little patience, and he shall soon see each of these three sisters appear in their proper colours, as each acts her part on the theatre of this history.

The great quality and fortune of Streni caused him to be visited by many persons of the first rank in Florence, and his daughters beauty drew many gallants to make suit to them, especially to Baptistina and Amarantha; but their father was resolute to marry their eldest sister Jaquinta first; so that when any nobleman or gentleman came to his house, she only was to be seen, and the other two were locked up in their chamber, which could not but be much grief to them: whilst Jaquinta on the other hand, armed with her father's love and authority, grew extremely imperious and stately, triumphing to see herself thus preferred before her sisters: seeing they were sought for in marriage by many cavaliers, she was not a little afflicted at it, but then she comforted herself again with the remembrance that they dared not disobey nor contradict their father's will.

The beauty of Baptistina and Amarantha was a great eye-sore to Jaquinta, who knowing that many gentlemen loved and admired them, was greatly vexed to see that no one paid addresses to her, and her desire to marry being so inordinately strong and libidinous, she would almost

accepted of any man for a husband, that would have been contented with her for a wife. But finding it impossible to draw to herself the respect of any one while her sisters were in the way, she cunningly prevailed upon her father to send them as it were into exile; and when they dreamt nothing of the matter, they were hurried away in a coach to his country-house at Cardura, near Pistoia, in charge and custody of an old beldam, formerly their governess, named Dona Malevola, who had strict orders to shut them up from the access or conversation of any man whatsoever.

Baptistina and Amarantha being thus by force banished from Florence to Cardura, they made no doubt, but that their ill treatment proceeded as much from the pride and malice of their sister Jaquinta, as from the severity of their father; they knew not what saint to implore for assistance, nor of any remedy to their evil but patience, which was at length quite tired out, when they found their ill-natured keeper Malevola, every day more and more strict in restraining them of their liberty; they therefore at last plucking up their spirits, resolved to write a submissive letter to their father, and a peremptory one to their sister Jaquinta, to endeavour to procure their return to Florence, and accordingly sent these that follow, by a trusty servant named Bernardo:

BAPTISTINA and AMARANTHA to
STRENI.

“IT is with much astonishment and
“grief to us, that you have so suddenly banished us from your presence,
“and from Florence, to live here rather

“as

" as prisoners than your daughters, in
 " your country-house of Cardura; and
 " having the honour to be so great a
 " part of yourself, we do not a little
 " wonder, what our errors or crimes
 " should be, that we must be enforced
 " to be deprived of that felicity, and suf-
 " fer this misery. If we have been fought
 " unto by any noblemen or gentlemen;
 " it hath been in the way of marriage,
 " and therefore in that of honour, and
 " yet we have still so strictly tied our
 " fancies to our duties, and our affections
 " to our obedience towards you, that in
 " the least degree we have not swerved
 " from your consent, but have done,
 " and do still inviolably make your plea-
 " sure therein our resolution, and your
 " will and command our law: but we
 " are confident, that although you are
 " the cause, yet our sister Jaquinta is
 " the sole author of this our sorrowful
 " and unmerited sequestration, who, per-
 " adventure, in regard that her beauty
 " comes short of ours, thinks that her ma-
 " lice therefore must not only exceed the
 " bounds of reason, but of nature. And
 " although she alledge her privilege and
 " prerogative of years against us, yet
 " because our blood is as good as hers,
 " and our hearts and education no worse,
 " therefore we beseech you to be so fa-
 " vourable and kind to us, that in re-
 " gard her malice and pride hath made
 " her our accuser, and which is worse,
 " our enemy, that you will not make her
 " our judge, but that we may speedily
 " re-obtain the happiness to return and
 " live with you in Florence, without
 " which we shall assuredly either live here
 " in despair, or shortly die in discontent
 " and misery; which request of ours is

" so just and equal, as you cannot deny
 " it to us, either in affection or nature,
 " much less in reason or pity. God ever
 " bless you with happiness, and make us
 " happy in your blessing.

" BAPTISTINA."
 " AMARANTHA."

The other letter to their sister Ja-
 quinta was as follows:

BAPTISTINA and AMARANTHA to
 JAQUINTA.

" **H**AVING curiously examined our
 " thoughts and actions, we cannot
 " find the least shadow of cause, much
 " less of reason, why you should sharply
 " exasperate our father against us, so
 " suddenly to banish and exile us from
 " Florence to Cardura; neither do we
 " think it is for that we are fairer than
 " yourself, but that you are more malicious
 " than we, which has occasioned you, and
 " precipitated him to this sharp resolu-
 " tion against us. If you are desirous of
 " a husband, let it content you, that as
 " yet we no way intend or desire to be-
 " come wives to any, and therefore if
 " you will not believe us, at least be-
 " lieve this truth from us, that you have
 " far more reason to doubt your own
 " haste, than any way to suspect or fear
 " ours therein; for while you pray for a
 " husband, we will first make it our
 " prayers to God, that we may be capa-
 " ble and happy to deserve good ones.
 " We advise you therefore in love, and
 " counsel you in affection and charity, to
 " consider seriously with yourself that we
 " are your sisters, not your servants,
 " much less your enemies; and in that
 " regard

“ regard that we are as unworthy of
 “ your malice, as unwilling and incapa-
 “ ble to digest it, because the priority
 “ of your years can no way justly intro-
 “ duce an inequality in our blood; and if
 “ you will not inforce us to degenerate
 “ from ourselves, and consequently from
 “ the nature and affection of sisters, you
 “ shall do us great right, and to yourself
 “ more reason, to cause our father to
 “ recall us home to him, with as much
 “ celerity and favour, as he sent us away
 “ from him with discourtesy and indig-
 “ nation.

“ BAPTISTINA.

“ AMARANTHA.”

The lackey Bernardo arriving at Florence, and having delivered these two letters to Streni and Jaquinta, they breaking up the seals thereof, perused and read over their contents; when he, smiling to see the indiscretion of these his two daughters, attributed this their disobedience towards him, and their discontent towards their sister Jaquinta, rather to ignorance and simplicity, than to malice, and yet he could not but wonder at this their bold and peremptory letter sent him; but for Jaquinta, she was so galled and nettled with her sister's insolence, as she thought it, that it exceedingly troubled and perplexed her, and the more so, in that she feared their letter to her father might induce him to recall them to Florence, which she was resolved to do all in her power to prevent, being desirous to govern him and his house without any rivals or competitors. She therefore went to him, and in the softest and sweetest terms which either cunning or malice could invent, extremely incensed him against her

sisters, alledging that their stay in Cardura was necessary, and that the disobedient motion for their return to Florence, was too insolent and insupportable; and therefore she hoped he would have no regard to it, any more than to their malicious reflections upon her. As to any thoughts or desire of a husband, she vowed she had none, but what was wholly guided and directed by his will and pleasure, being resolved always to live in the strictest obedience to his commands, and desiring rather to die or suffer any misfortune than the loss of his favour; which flattering speeches so prevailed upon old Streni, that being all in choler against Baptistina and Amarantha, he resolved to return them a very sharp answer, and commanded Jaquinta to do the like. So both retiring for the present, they soon after delivered the two following letters to Bernardo, who returning to Cardura, gave them to the young ladies his mistresses.

STRENI to BAPTISTINA and AMARANTHA.

“ IF it be not purposely to cross your
 “ own good fortunes, you would not
 “ so rashly and peremptorily have at-
 “ tempted to cross my good intentions
 “ and affections towards you, in sending
 “ you to Cardura, but would have
 “ brooked it with as much patience as I
 “ see you do with discontent; and before
 “ this act of your disobedience, now re-
 “ vealed to me in your letter, I held
 “ you for my daughters, not for mine
 “ enemies, and mine house of Cardura
 “ rather a palace than a prison for you.
 “ If you knew how ill those errors of
 “ yours become you, you would rather
 “ redeem

"redeem them with repentance and
 "tears, than remember them with the
 "least thought of delight and satisfac-
 "tion. Nay, think with yourselves
 "what modesty and wisdom it is for your
 "green youth to presume or dare to teach
 "my grey age, how or when to choose
 "you husbands. If you have any judg-
 "ment remaining in you, then judge
 "with yourselves how false and incon-
 "gruous your reasons are, when in words
 "you pretend to obey my commands,
 "but in effects you wilfully oppose and
 "contradict them. Having used me
 "with so small respect, see again with
 "how much untruth and envy you abuse
 "your sister Jaquinta, who, to my know-
 "ledge, is as innocent of those false as-
 "persions of pride and malice towards
 "you, as yourselves are guilty of them
 "towards her, since she loves nothing
 "more, and you affect nothing less, than
 "humility and charity, their opposites;
 "for believe me I find her to be your
 "true friend, and you to be the greatest
 "and only enemy to yourselves, for
 "otherwise you could not live in dis-
 "content, since no young ladies of Tus-
 "cany, or very few in all Italy, have
 "had more care taken in their educa-
 "tion, and in all things else suitable to
 "your rank and quality. If you have a
 "mind to preserve the continuance of
 "my affection towards you, I charge
 "you to make it your delight and prac-
 "tice to think of God, and not yet of
 "husbands; instead of that envy which
 "you express towards your sister Ja-
 "quinta, resolve to shew that respect
 "which is due to an elder sister. Apply
 "yourselves to your books, your needles,
 "and your lutes, and stuff not your heads

"with those vain conceits with which you
 "have stuffed your letter to me, which,
 "with a copy of this, I now inclose to
 "your governess Malevola, that she
 "hereafter may be more careful of your
 "conduct and carriage, and to see that
 "you give more of your time to dis-
 "cretion and modesty, and less to idle-
 "ness and vanity; and so I beseech God,
 "who hath made you my daughters, to
 "bless and make you his faithful ser-
 "vants.

"STRENI."

JAQUINTA to BAPTISTINA and AMARANTHA.

"I Have been so far from incensing
 "my father against you, or counsel-
 "ling him to send you from Florence to
 "Cardura, that it was done not only
 "without my consent, but without my
 "knowledge. As for my thoughts of a
 "husband, in what you say thereof, you
 "equally wrong me and the truth, for
 "it is what I have the least concern
 "about; therefore my haste to marry
 "comes infinitely short of your fears
 "and jealousies; nor can there be any
 "cause but pride and malice for the un-
 "worthy slanders which you have let fall
 "from your pens. As for the priority
 "of my years, that shall never make
 "me esteem you the less, and to shew
 "how much I desire to be thought a
 "good christian, and return good for
 "evil, although you condemn my friend-
 "ship, I will endeavour to deserve yours,
 "and try, to the utmost of my skill, to
 "prevail upon my father to send for you
 "home to Florence from Cardura, where
 "I do assure you, I shall look upon your
 "company

" company as a great happiness, and, except by a future deportment you give me cause to change this sisterly affection, I shall live and die with great sincerity and kindness, the same that I have always been towards you.

" JAQUINTA."

Baptistina and Amarantha having read these two letters from their father and sister, could not but be much displeased at his unkindness and her dissimulation, and with the thoughts of being forced to live a solitary country life in Cardura, while Jaquinta triumphed over them, in the enjoyment of all the gaieties and splendor that the court and city of Florence could afford. They pitied the weakness of their father's judgment, in suffering himself to be so led away by this deceitful and hypocritical sister, whose malice and hatred they had every day fresh proofs of, in the tyrannical usage of their governess Malevola, who was now become a jailor to them, and they made no doubt but this his ill treatment was at the instigation of their sister Jaquinta. All this, with the despair of ever being married themselves if they waited till she was made a wife, whom they thought too ugly ever to get a husband, so much increased their hatred against her, that abandoning grace and religion, they both desired and plotted her death; and of these two sisters Baptistina was the most forward in the bloody purpose, for the devil was so strong in her, that she oftentimes said to herself she should never have any content in this world till her sister Jaquinta was in the next, and dropt some words tending to that purpose to Amarantha, who at first

seemed shocked at the proposal, but was at length overcome by the arguments of Baptistina, who persuaded her that to gain a good husband for a bad sister, was a very desirable exchange, and that it was much better her life should be cut short, than both theirs made miserable.

These two unnatural young women, having then agreed to dispatch their sister, and having consulted on the manner of doing it, at last agreed that the best way would be by poison, but as they could not easily determine which of them should administer it, came to this agreement, that it should be decided by lot, and Baptistina was the person on whom it fell. But as their design could not be executed in Florence, their next difficulty was how to escape from their watchful governess Malevola, at Cardura; but this they got over by the help of their faithful servant Bernardo, who hiring them a coach to be ready at midnight, packed up such things as they thought necessary for their journey, and stole away when their governess was fast asleep in bed, and arrived at their father's house between nine and ten o'clock the next morning, where throwing themselves at his feet, they craved his blessing and excuse for returning to Florence without his leave, saying, that they would rather die than be any longer deprived of his presence, or the pleasure of paying their duty to him in person.

Their father received them in great wrath, and vowed they should be immediately sent back again, but their sister Jaquinta dissembled her malice, and, though she secretly wished them out of Florence, pretended to be greatly rejoiced at their return, and they, not to be out-done in hypocrisy, expressed great kindness

kindness to her, though they wished her out of the world, and were come with an intention to effect their desire.

The news of these two wicked, but beautiful young women's being come home again to their father's house, was no sooner known, but the gallants of Florence began to flock about them, with their compliments and addresses as usual, which so heightened and revived their sister Jaquinta's malice against them, that she began to tamper again with her father to send them back to Cardura, or to cloister them up in a nunnery. However, this was not carried so secretly, but Baptista and Amarantha had notice of it, which made them resolve to hasten the execution of their bloody design; the thoughts of a nunnery being more terrible to them than their confinement, under their governess Malevola. Amarantha accordingly having bought the poison, Baptista administered it to their sister Jaquinta, in a lemon posset, which they had observed she often drank at that time, whereof she died in ten days; none but God and themselves being witnesses to the unnatural fact they had committed, in which they rejoiced as much as their father was grieved and afflicted: but God did not suffer them long to triumph in this their victory.

Baptista first felt the weight of the divine vengeance, who, within six weeks after the deplorable death of Jaquinta, was attacked by a languishing sickness, which changed the white tincture of her skin to a yellow hue, and preyed upon the roses of her cheeks: in short, she was almost brought to death's door by the jaundice, which sickness seemed purposely sent by God to punish her execrable crime of

poisoning her sister. The beauty of Baptista was not more eclipsed, than that of Amarantha was daily increasing in lustre, so that all those nobles and gallants of Florence, who came to seek Streni's daughters in marriage, did infinitely prefer Amarantha to the other, and passionately desired her as much as they slighted and neglected Baptista, who being not ignorant hereof, saw with impatience the courtship that was paid to her sister, therefore could not bear to see herself despised without the utmost envy and malice, which transported her so far, that she had once thoughts of making Amarantha share in the same fate with her other sister Jaquinta: but the horror of the first murder still dwelling in her remembrance, and the devil having not yet sufficient power over her to make her commit another upon the back of it, made her think of another method to answer her own ends, and work her malice on Amarantha, which by imitating the conduct of her dead sister Jaquinta, and by cunningly prevailing upon her father to send her away to Cardura into the safe custody of old Malevola; which he did accordingly, to the great grief and perplexity of Amarantha, who was exceedingly discontented with her father, but infinitely more incensed against her sister Baptista, by whose contrivance she knew it was, that she was thus made a prisoner, and banished from every thing that could give her pleasure and delight.

She could but wonder that her sister should so soon forget their joint crime and several dangers, in so inhumanly and cruelly poisoning their eldest sister, which she thought might have made her a little more cautious in her behaviour to her, vengeance

vengeance therefore she was resolved on; but in the mean time, her first concern was how to get out of her confinement, every day seeming an age to her, while she continued in it; sometimes she thought of stealing away to Florence, either on foot or on horseback in disguise, without letting any one know of it, till she came to her father's house; at other times she thought of hiring a coach, and going thither, as she and her sister had done before; but then again laying both these designs aside, and resolving what might be done by writing to her father and sister, she sent the two following letters to Florence, by her old trusty servant Bernardo:

AMARANTHA to STRENI.

"MY constant respect and obedience
" to you, hath not deserved your
" displeasure, much less to be punished
" with banishment from your presence,
" which I look upon as the greatest fel-
" licity I can enjoy upon earth; you have
" too much goodness of yourself, I am
" sure, to use this severity, therefore it
" must proceed from the pride and am-
" bition of my sister Baptistina, who
" would domineer as imperiously over
" me, as our deceased sister Jaquinta did
" over us both; the remedy hereof is
" every way worthy of you as you are
" my father, as much as hers, and I
" hope will not make so great distinction
" between us, that she shall enjoy all,
" and I no part of your favour, which
" if you are resolved on, and will not
" permit me to breathe the air of Flo-
" rence, I will shortly hazard my life to
" enjoy that of heaven, for already hath

" this forced exile brought me to extreme
" discontent, and almost to utter de-
" spair.

" AMARANTHA."

AMARANTHA to BAPTISTINA.

"COULD you not be contented to
" live happy in Florence, but you
" must needs constrain our father to make
" me miserable here in Cardura? Is our
" sister Jaquinta's blood already cold, and
" the memory as well as manner and
" cause of her death so soon forgotten?
" Judge with yourself if you are not as
" devoid of judgment as of affection and
" charity? What a palpable, yea, what
" a gross and sottish vice is it in you to
" make yourself guilty of her pride, and
" heir apparent to her malice? I remem-
" ber those ungrateful crimes of hers to-
" wards us with pity, for which reason I
" the more detest them in you, and I can-
" not but admire at your indiscretion, in
" thus provoking me when you know
" your life is at my mercy, not that I
" would be so foolish to endanger my
" own ruin by ruining you, if you will
" be contented to live in peace and af-
" fection, which you may give a proof
" of, by causing my father to recall me
" home to Florence, which is a favour
" I will always acknowledge with grati-
" tude and sincerity; but if you deny me
" this courtesy, blame yourself for it, if
" I fly a pitch far beyond your expecta-
" tion.

" AMARANTHA."

Bernardo being at Florence with these letters, as soon as he came to the house of his master Streni, meeting Baptistina in

the hall, and thinking to deliver her sister's letter to her, by mistake gave her that which was directed to her father; which she observing, immediately broke open, and read to herself, and was not a little enraged at the contents of it; so folding it up, and putting it in her pocket, she turned to Bernardo, and asked him for her sister's letter that was directed to herself, for that which he had already given her, she told him, was for her father. Whereupon Bernardo very much confounded at the mistake he had made, gave her her own letter, and desired that back again which was for her father, but she having read the other letter, with disdain in her looks, and malice in her eyes, tears that directed for her father, before Bernardo's face, and then returns him this bitter answer: "Tell that proud girl "Amarantha, that it is both my father's "pleasure and mine, that she continues "in Cardura, and not see Florence, till "she receives other orders from us, and "for any further answer from either of "us, bid her not have the vanity or folly "to expect." After these words she went away with much indignation in her looks, throwing the door furiously after her. Bernardo, not expecting such a sharp entertainment, and seeing it wholly impossible for him now to have any access to Streni, or answer from Baptistina, left Florence, returning in all haste to Cardura to Amarantha, to whom he punctually related the haughty answer of her sister, not omitting a syllable, but took no notice of the mistake he had made in delivering the letter to her which was intended for her father.

Amarantha was all inflamed with choler at this imperious carriage of her sister Bap-

tistina, the thoughts of which did so transport her with malice, that she vowed, that nothing upon earth, nor even the thoughts of heaven or hell, should prevent her taking a speedy and ample revenge. She had formerly consented to poison her eldest sister Jaquinta, and now swore to be the death of her other sister Baptistina, the execution of which bloody purpose was what she employed her whole thoughts upon. An accident happened at this time which very much assisted her in the design.

Baptistina had a chambermaid named Pieria, of about twenty-four years of age, who though but poor, was well born and very pretty, which made her deserving of better treatment than she met with from her mistress, who was not only very slipant with her tongue, but sometimes with her fingers, and the poor maid having at this time broke a large looking-glass, was used in a most cruel manner by Baptistina, who not content with beating her, had dragged her about the floor by the hair of her head, and given her many kicks with her foot. Pieria's spirit was too high to brook such usage, therefore disdaining any longer to serve so barbarous a mistress, she privately packed up her apparel, left Florence, and fled to Cardura, resolving henceforth to live and die with the younger sister Amarantha. There was likewise another reason for her taking this resolution, which was the affection she bore to Bernardo, having for three or four years been passionately in love with him, and having employed many of her friends to prevail upon him to marry her; but he was still as averse as she was forward in this suit; for although he liked her beauty, and could

not

not but admire her tall and slender shape, yet he hated her poverty; and on account of some small lands that were left him by his father, he thought himself infinitely too good for her husband, and she was too chaste to be his strumpet, though she had not been without solicitations from him for that wicked purpose. These passages were not altogether unknown to Amarantha, who had a great kindness for Pieria, and received and welcomed her with as much pleasure as her sister Baptistina had sorrow when she found she had left her, and that sorrow was redoubled as soon as she understood that she was gone to live with her discontented sister at Cardura; wherefore she made many private overtures to her to return, and promised any manner of acknowledgment and reparation for the injury she had done her, but she found that errors are not so soon repaired as committed; for Pieria being deaf to all her intreaties, endeavoured to engage herself rather to Amarantha's new affection, than to Baptistina's old unkindness.

On the other side Amarantha was glad of this resolution in her maid, for the devil had now put a thought in her head, that she might make her assistant in her bloody design against her sister, and that no body could be so fit to undertake it as this new maid, and her old servant Bernardo, not doubting of bringing them both over to her purpose, since she knew that love and money could easily act wonders in the hearts of those, who desire the one and want the other; and also being perfectly well acquainted that Pieria had deeply loved Bernardo for many years, and wished to have him for her husband, and that Bernardo on his side had no ob-

jection to her, but on account of her poverty; wherefore believing that she would undertake any thing to obtain him for a husband, as he would for the sake of gold, she resolved to make her bloody proposition to them separately, and first she began with Pieria, who was easily overcome by the hopes of satisfying her revenge on one side, and having the reward of Bernardo's love on the other; so she promised, if Bernardo would join with her in it, to stifle Baptistina in her bed.

Amarantha, the next day, opened the business to Bernardo, the which, if he would undertake to perform, and take Pieria for his wife, she promised faithfully to pay him an annuity of one hundred and fifty ducatoons for his life, and to be a constant friend to them both. Bernardo at first seemed staggered at the proposal, but at length being enamoured of Pieria's youth and beauty, and especially with the yearly sum of gold, which was to be given for their maintenance, he forgot himself, and which was worse, his God; and without further consideration, he promised Amarantha to perform both her requests, as well the murder as the marriage; whereupon she carried him into a closet, and there calling for Pieria, acquainted her with what Bernardo and she had agreed upon; then making them join hands in her presence, they contracted themselves to each other, and all three severally and jointly swore secrecy, and also punctually to perform what they had promised. Amarantha, the faster and stronger to tie them to her purpose, having opened a casket, gave each of them fifty ducatoons in gold, as an earnest of what they were to expect from her future

ture friendship and kindness to them, promising each as much more when they had sent Baptistina to another world. Bernardo and Pieria in return, both swore that her will should be their law, and their best service, yea, their lives, at her command.

This lamentable compact being thus secretly closed, by these three wretches, Bernardo and Pieria being eager to enjoy the sweets of love, begged their mistress, that their marriage might be consummated before they perpetrated the murder of her sister Baptistina, but she who was clear-sighted in her malice and revenge, considering that this seal of marriage, was the great tie upon them to perform what they had undertaken, thought if that was once over, they might grow cool upon the matter, therefore strongly having opposed this motion, still insisted upon their not marrying till her sister was dispatched. Bernardo, well observing how cautious she was, thought it discreet to follow her example, and knowing that when the murder was once committed, she might at pleasure revoke her verbal annuity; to prevent which, he told her he was willing at her desire to defer his marriage; but withal, humbly requested her to secure to him the gratuity she had promised, under her hand and seal: which, because she could not well refuse, she did in these terms:

“ In consideration, that my servant Bernardo doth espouse and take to wife
 “ my chambermaid Pieria, I do promise,
 “ that after the consummation of such
 “ marriage, upon my honour, I will
 “ well and truly pay unto the said Bernardo, or his assigns, annually, during

“ the term of his natural life, the full
 “ and entire sum of one hundred and
 “ fifty ducatoons of Florence money; in
 “ witness and testimony of which, I have
 “ hereunto set my hand and seal.

“ AMARANTHA.”

A contract signed in blood as well as ink; and which therefore, God, in his divine providence, did hereafter produce, and bring to light, to serve as a powerful witness and instrument against those who gave and received it.

Amarantha having thus given her promise to Bernardo, and received his and his intended wife's oaths in exchange, now thought that the business could never be compleated unless she found some way to get Pieria back again to her mistress at Florence, and whilst she was ruminating on the means, an accident happened which very much favoured her designs. For by this time Baptistina had wrote over to Malevola to deal secretly with Pieria, to return to her service in Florence, promising that her welcome, and the future kindness of her mistress should exceed any thing she could expect.

Pieria, knowing how necessary her presence was at Florence, for executing the wicked enterprize she was engaged in, needed not many persuasions from Malevola to return, but before her departure, another close conference was held, wherein the devil presided, and wherein his three agents, Amarantha, Bernardo, and Pieria agreed, that on the fifteenth day after Pieria was arrived in Florence, Bernardo should follow, and that should be the precise time of putting the finishing stroke to their barbarous tragedy. This concluded on, Pieria set out
 for

for Florence, where she was received with much courtesy and kindness by her old mistress Baptista, who, for the seal and cement of her reconciliation made her a present of a very rich mantua and petticoat, which she had very little worn; but though Pieria seemed to receive it with great thankfulness, and to promise a grateful return by her diligence and affection, yet we shall see quite the contrary; for the longing desire she had of making sure of Bernardo for a husband, made her think every day an age before the fifteenth was arrived, which was the time appointed to do that which will shew both her ingratitude and inhumanity.

The fatal day being come, Bernardo was punctual to his time at Florence, and at one o'clock, after midnight, at Streni's house, where he found the little garden door open, and his Pieria there ready to receive and welcome him; so greeting one another with many amorous kisses, she led him by the hand to the outer door of her lady's chamber, where she delivered to him a pillow, having provided herself with another, with which they were to stifle Baptista. These vile wretches having put off their shoes, stole softly to the bed-side, and finding the unhappy young lady fast asleep, executed their barbarous design, without giving her time to beg of the Lord to have mercy on her soul.

Bernardo and Pieria having perpetrated the murder, they left the breathless body on the bed, and having fastened the door which had a spring lock, they flung the key through a cranny into the chamber; then with great privacy and silence they slid away to the postern of the garden, to

the side of which Bernardo's horse was fastened by an iron ring in the wall; so taking leave of one another for that time, he promised very speedily to return to Florence, and then to marry her. Whilst Pieria being retired to her bed, in the dead and dismal part of the night, slept as soundly as if she had no guilt to trouble her conscience, her intended husband, the wicked Bernardo, galloped through the streets of Florence towards that gate which led to Pistoia, and there the Almighty, in his divine providence, caused his horse to fall under him, whereby he broke his neck, and died upon the spot.

The body of Bernardo lay all night in his own blood, and the dirt of the streets, unespied by any mortal eye, but was found in the morning, as was his horse, straggling about the street without a rider. The criminal judges being made acquainted herewith, ordered the body to be searched, and in the pockets, instead of gold, they found the fore-mentioned promise of the annuity from Amarantha, whom knowing to be signor Leonardo Streni's daughter, they judged it proper to acquaint him with the accident, not doubting but this was the same Bernardo that was mentioned in the paper they had found. The news of this disaster being blown all over the city of Florence, had already reached Streni's house, wherein Pieria, strangely alarmed and confounded with the guilt of her conscience, and supposing that this judgment of God, in the death of Bernardo, was the forerunner of her own, fled out of the house, and endeavoured to conceal herself in the most private part of the city. By this time the criminal officers were come to acquaint signor Streni with the mournful accident, and shewing him

the paper concerning the annuity, asked him, if that was the lady Amarantha, his daughter's hand, and if the dead body was that of her servant Bernardo.

Streni, with a countenance composed of astonishment, fear, and sorrow, acknowledged it was his daughter's own handwriting, and the dead person was her servant; whereupon they enquired for Amarantha and her chambermaid Pieria; the first he told them was at his manor of Cardura near Pistoia, but the maid was in the house, so causing her to be sought for, and not being immediately found, he sent to look for her in his daughter's chamber, when the servant returning, reported that the chamber-door was fast locked, and they could get no one to answer them; they all resolved to go to the chamber together, when calling aloud several times, both upon the young lady and her maid, and hearing no one speak, they forced open the door, and, to their great surprise, found Baptistina dead, but yet hardly cold in her bed; they then caused the body to be secretly searched, by some surgeons and gentlewomen of the neighbourhood, who were all of opinion that she must have been stifled in her bed, her face being very black and swollen with struggling for life. Every one was amazed at this spectacle, and her father Streni almost drowned in tears, knew not what to say, or how to behave himself: but the judges upon considering the matter, and the several circumstances of Pieria's flight, the death of Bernardo, the contract found in his pocket, signed by Amarantha, did, as it were prompted by God, vehemently suspect that they were all three consenting to, and guilty of the murder of Baptistina; notwithstanding the

key of her chamber was thrown in the inside, to deceive the world, and have it thought she had made away with herself. So leaving the sorrowful father to his tears, they betook themselves to their seat of judgment, and instantly caused all the gates of the city to be shut, and a strict and curious search to be made in all parts thereof, for the apprehension of Pieria, who within three hours was taken in the house of her aunt, a poor woman and laundress, named Eleanora Fracasa.

The judges advertised hereof, ordered her to be brought before them, charging her with being concerned with Bernardo in the murder of her mistress, by the privacy and instigation of Amarantha. She was for a long time unable to answer them for her tears, yet was she so far from having any tokens of grace or real repentance, that she at first boldly denied all; affirming that Amarantha, Bernardo, and herself were innocent of attempting any thing against the life of Baptistina; and that, if she was dead, she died a natural death by the appointment of God, and no otherwise, for that she left her very well in her chamber the night before. In this answer the devil had made her so confident, that she added many frightful oaths and imprecations thereto, in her own and their justification; but this was so far from diminishing, that it very much increased the suspicion of her clear-sighted judges, who condemned her first to prison, and then to the rack; upon the first of which her courage began to fail her; and her intended husband being dead, in whom lived all the imaginary joys of her heart, she was so dispirited, that, with many tears, and deep-fetched sighs, she confessed to her judges that she
and

and Bernardo had stifled Baptistina in her bed; but still affirmed that Amarantha was wholly innocent of the matter; flattering herself with this foolish hope, that Amarantha, in return, would endeavour to get her a pardon: but her crime was of too black a die to admit of any favour, and the other stood in as much need of pardon as herself.

Pieria was adjudged to be hanged; but first she was sent back to prison, and the judges the very next morning secretly dispatched three of their Ibiers, or Serjeants, to Cardura, to seize the lady Amarantha, and to bring her to Florence; being very confident, notwithstanding Pieria's denial of it, that she was likewise deeply concerned in the murder of her sister.

Amarantha, not dreaming in Cardura of what had happened in Florence to Bernardo and Pieria, but flattering herself with hopes, that by this time they had undoubtedly made away with her sister Baptistina, and that she should shortly return to Florence, and have the sole command of her father's house, and then obtain some gallant cavalier for her husband; she had on the very expectation of this pleasing news, by the return of her servant Bernardo, filled her mind with such thoughts of joy and triumph, that she had dressed herself in her very best and richest apparel, and was continually looking out of the window that pointed towards Florence, in hopes of spying the welcome messenger of her future good fortune; but, contrary to her expectation, some time before dinner she spied three men coming that way, who were soon after brought into her chamber by her governess Malevola; these were the three Serjeants who were sent to secure her person, but with a dis-

sembling countenance they told her, that signor Streni, her father, had sent them to conduct her speedily home to him at Florence; whereupon Amarantha enquired whether they had no letter from her father, to which one of them made answer, that her father's haste and her preferment would not permit him to write to her, for that he perfectly knew from him, he was now upon matching her to a rich and noble husband: her governess Malevola likewise demanded of them, if he had not written to herself; they answered no, but that he bad them tell her, that he would have her without delay to bring away his daughter Amarantha with her, and themselves to Florence by coach, and only one footboy.

The pupil and governess having consulted hereon, the very name of a husband made the first as willing as the second was discontented to go without a letter; but the policy of the serjeants so prevailed with the simplicity of this young lady and old gentlewoman, that they speedily packed up their trunks, and then dining, took coach and horse for Florence; during which short journey, although the mirth and joy of Amarantha was great, yet she found now and then some secret uneasiness on the account of her not hearing from her man Bernardo. When they were all safely arrived at Florence, these serjeants, who had learnt their parts well, instead of carrying Amarantha to her father's house, clapt her up close prisoner in the common jail of the city, notwithstanding all her cries, and tears, and prayers to the contrary, and then sent her governess Malevola to her father, to give him notice thereof.

Old Streni was almost distracted, tearing

ing the grey hairs of his head and beard, at this sad and unexpected news; and extremely fearing the consequence thereof, speedily repaired to the judges, and with tears in his eyes, throwing himself at their feet, begged them to think of his age, and the youth of his imprisoned daughter, and that having unfortunately lost his other children, they would not likewise deprive him of this, nor cast away her life upon bare presumption or circumstance, nor listen to the false reports of his or her enemies; but these grave magistrates, having as great regard to truth and justice, as to the calls of parental affection, cut him off short with this reply, that they honoured his age, and respected his daughter's youth and quality, that he should have justice, and that according to the laws of Florence, but that he must expect no more: so, with this cold answer, he returned home as sorrowfully as he came out, not being permitted to see or speak with his daughter Amarantha in prison; and his next melancholy task was to order the funeral solemnity of his other murdered daughter Baptistina.

We come now to Amarantha in prison, who being debarred from speaking with any, except those miserable comforters her jailors, she began to think of the danger she was in, for she had heard from the lower court through her chamber window, that her sister Baptistina was murdered, her maid Pieria imprisoned, and herself vehemently suspected of the same; she now therefore began to think of her former crimes with repentance, and of her inhuman cruelties to her two eldest sisters, with contrition, vowing to Almighty God, that if it should please his Divine Majesty to spare her this time, she would hence-

forth lead a new and religious life. In the midst therefore of these good thoughts, but vain desires and wishes, she yet flattered herself with the poor hope that her man Bernardo was still living, and so the contract for the annuity was still a secret; and both he and Pieria could not do her any wrong, without endangering their own lives; but should the worst that could happen befall her, she thought her father's wealth and interest might procure her a pardon. But all these idle imaginations vanished in smoke, for the very next morning she was sent for before her judges to a private examination; who, after they had made a grave and religious speech to her, first demanded if she had not employed her servant Bernardo and Pieria to murder her sister Baptistina: secondly, if she had not given an annuity of one hundred and fifty ducatoons to him during his life, to marry Pieria, both which she boldly denied: then they produced the contract in her own hand-writing, at which she seemed greatly perplexed and confounded; but her judges, measuring her heart by her countenance, thought they were now in a fair way of making a full discovery; and esteeming it no crime to use some policy with her to that end, they told her, that, in regard to her own youth and beauty, and to her father's great age and nobility, they would willingly save her, if she did not cast herself away by her obstinacy; that her life and safety depended upon an open and plain confession of her crime; that they had undeniable proofs of her having been accessory to the murder of her sister, and that Pieria, who was executed that morning, had affirmed it with her dying breath. At which home charge of the judges,

judges, and on hearing of the supposed confession of Pieria, she being wholly vanquished by the fear of what was to befall herself, or by her choler and resentment to Pieria, fell on her knees before her judges, and with a shower of tears owned herself to have been the prime author of her sister Baptistina's murder, and that she had hired Bernardo and Pieria to perpetrate the same, giving him an annuity of one hundred and fifty ducatoons, and to each of them fifty ducatoons more in hand, and then most bitterly exclaimed against the name and memory of that ungrateful and base wretch Pieria, as she now termed her, in that she could not be contented to die herself, but must also bring her life in question too. Here she took occasion to lay hold on the judges late promise, begging them, with uplifted hands, to save her life, since, as they desired, she had made an ample confession of her guilt; but they, having by this commendable means and artful policy, drawn the truth from Amarantha, told her they detested the barbarous fact of which she had been guilty, as much as they pitied her descent, her youth, and her beauty, and therefore must be obliged to forfeit their words with her, well knowing that God was glorified in the due and true execution of justice on all capital malefactors, and especially on murderers, who are monsters in nature, and a disgrace to their species, and that the greatness of their quality and blood are aggravations of their crimes.

These wise and religious judges therefore proved deaf to her requests, and blind to her tears, and so having first caused her to sign her confession, and then confronted her with Pieria, who now before

Amarantha's face owned all that had been said before, they adjudged them both to be hanged the next day, at the common place of execution, although old Streni, almost weighed down to his grave with extreme grief and sorrow for these misfortunes in his family, proffered the judges and the great duke, the greatest part of his estate to save this his youngest, and now his only daughter Amarantha; but his labour was lost, for the great duke and the learned judges grounded their resolution on this wholesome and wise maxim, that justice is one of the greatest supports of a state, and the truest means to preserve its prosperity and glory, and consequently, that all wilful and premeditated murderers could not be too soon exterminated, or too severely punished, and cut off from the world. So these two wretched women were sent back to prison, whither Streni sent some grave friars to his daughter, as the judges did to Pieria to prepare them for death; but it is with sorrow I am forced to say, that neither of them shewed any great signs of repentance, but were continually exclaiming against each other.

While all Florence resounded with the account of these base, and inhuman crimes, and the just condemnation of the vile perpetrators of them, the next morning, about ten o'clock, they were brought to the destined place of execution, there to receive their condign punishments for them. Pieria first mounted the ladder, who made a short speech at her death to this effect, "That her desire to obtain

" Bernardo for her husband had first

" drawn her to commit this murder on

" her lady Baptistina, but that it was far

" more her sister Amarantha's malice than

" her own, which had seduced her to

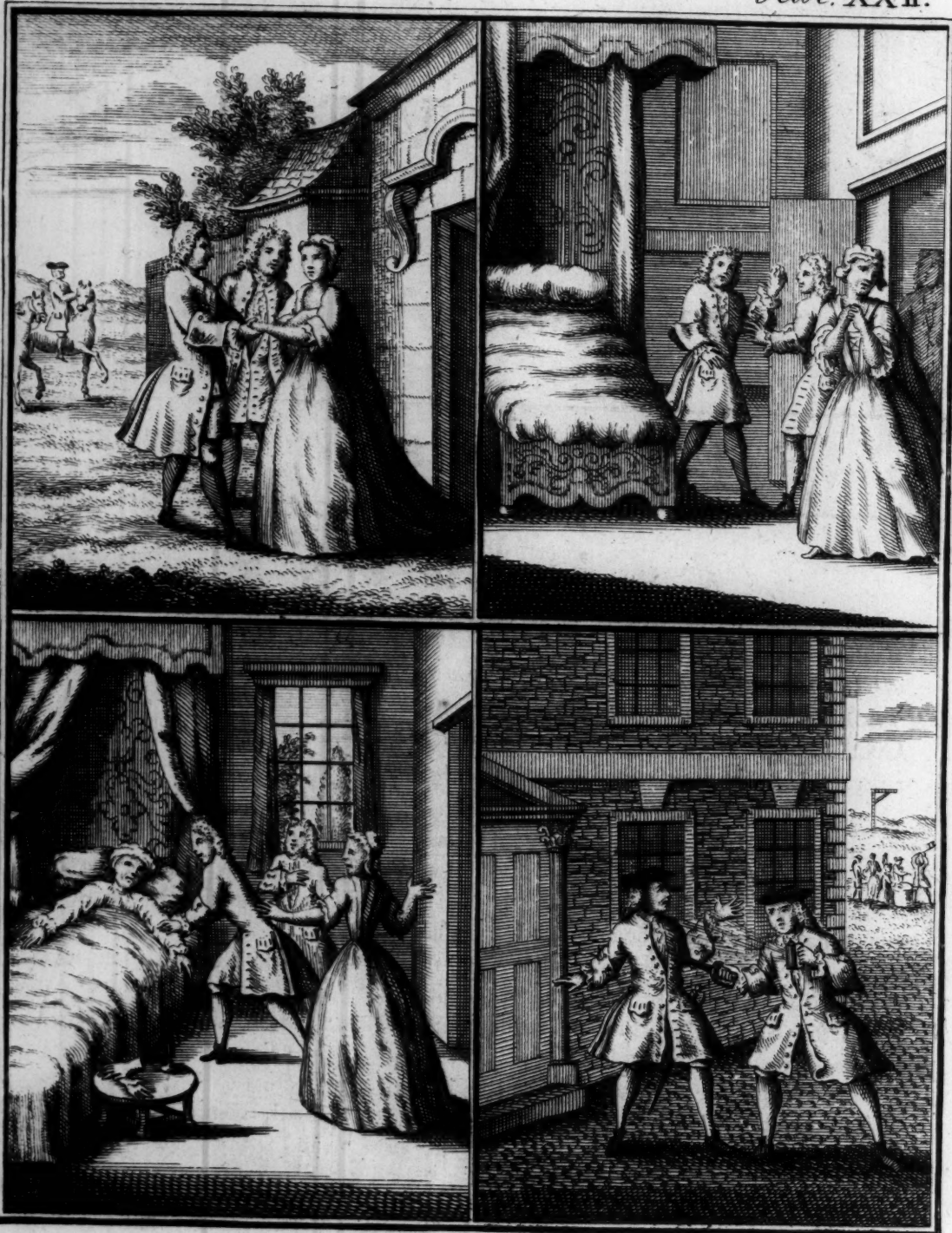
"the wicked resolution; and that this
 "her own shameful death was not half so
 "grievous to her, as the unfortunate end
 "of her lover Bernardo, whom she there
 "affirmed to the world, that she loved a
 "thousand times dearer than her own
 "life," with much more idle and ridicu-
 "lous discourse tending the same way, and
 "which favoured more of folly than of any
 "sense of shame or repentance; and then
 "she was turned off.

Next came Amarantha, who ascended
 the ladder with much more beauty than
 contrition, and bravery than repentance,
 for she had dressed herself more like a
 bride than a detestable murderers, who
 was sorry for her heinous offences. After
 looking about her, she vainly endeavoured
 to compose her countenance, and with a
 seeming contempt of death, and won-
 derful boldness, she there confessed, that
 she had not only caused her sister Baptis-
 tina to be stifled in her bed by Bernardo
 and Pieria, but that her sister Baptista
 and herself had formerly poisoned their
 elder sister Jaquinta, and that it was
 only their imperiousness and pride shewn
 in their behaviour towards her, which
 drew her to this resolution and revenge
 against them both; which, she said, she
 could now as little repent of, as she could
 heretofore remedy their faults which oc-

casioned her hatred to them. That in-
 deed her father's affliction was a great
 grief to her, even more than the thoughts
 of her own shameful and untimely death;
 then without any farther shew of repent-
 ance, nor even once calling upon God, or
 desiring the spectators to pray for her,
 she ordered the executioner to do his
 office.

Thus was Amarantha hanged for her
 second murder, and then, by her second
 sentence of the criminal judges, her body
 was burnt to ashes in the afternoon for
 the first. The same magistrates likewise,
 in honour of justice, caused the dead
 body of Bernardo to be hanged for two
 whole days, by his heels, in his shirt, at
 the same gallows, and then cast into the
 river Arno. They had also some thoughts
 of ordering the body of Baptista to be
 taken out of the grave and burnt, for
 being accessory with her sister Amarantha
 to the death of Jaquinta, but having no
 other than the words of Amarantha,
 which might possibly be spoke out of
 malice, and considering that God had
 already brought her to a deplorable end,
 they laid aside that design. As for old
 Streni, his affliction was so great for the
 loss of all his children in such lamentable
 ways, that he retired to his seat at Cardu-
 ra, where he did not long survive them.





GOD'S REVENGE

AGAINST

MURDER and ADULTERY.

HISTORY XXII.

ARGUMENT.

Martino poisons his Brother Pedro, and murders Monfredo in the Street. He afterwards grows mad, and in Confession reveals both these Murders to Father Thomas, his ghostly Father, who afterwards dying, discovers it by Letter to Ceciliana, the Widow of Monfredo, and Sister to Pedro and Martino. Martino has his Right Hand first cut off, and then is hanged for the same.

IN the ancient and renowned city of Burgos, in the province of old Castile in Spain, there dwelt a noble gentlewoman, named Dona Catherina Autunez, who by her deceased husband, Don Roderigo di Ricaldo, had two sons, Don Pedro and Don Martino, and one daughter, named Dona Ceciliana. Her eldest son Pedro was a gallant cavalier, of about twenty-eight years of age, tall and well made, his hair black, and of a swarthy and martial countenance, who, for the space of seven years, had served as a voluntier under that wise and va-

liant commander Don Gonfalez de Cordova, in Germany, and against the states of the Netherlands, and afterwards in Valtoline and Millan, against the Grifons and French, in all which wars he left behind him many memorable testimonies of his prowess, and purchased many honourable trophies of valour and generosity; but for any intellectual endowments he had not much to boast, being no scholar, and of but a mean capacity, yet he was honest, courteous and affable, particularly to his friends.

His

His brother Martino was about twenty-four years of age, short of stature, slender, but crook-backed, of an auburn complexion, with a withered face, and squint-eyed; his inclination extremely fullen, and by nature envious and revengeful, and more desirous of entertaining a midnight quarrel in the street, than a fair and open combat in the field; but as God is many times pleased to countervail and make amends for the defects of nature in the body by some rich gifts and perfections of the mind, so was this young man an excellent scholar, of an active and sharp wit, a fluent tongue, very eloquent, and a master in the art of persuasion; qualities on which he might have built a fair fame, if his vices had not greatly defaced and sullied them. Their sister Cecilia, of about twenty years of age, was of an indifferent height, inclining to corpulency, with black hair, a lovely brown complexion, large rolling eyes, and an air in her countenance more amorous than modest. She was of a nimble wit, and of a humour pleasant and facetious, but these she knew how to check, and by the pious care and austerity of her mother in her education, she could tell how to put on a very severe and reserved behaviour; but as the face proves not always a true index of the heart, so how retired soever her mother kept her from the company of men, yet her wanton eye conspiring with her lascivious heart, made her the more desirous thereof, and far the more licentious as it was forbidden her, so that she privately imparted her favours to two or three young gentlemen of the city of Bruges, and treated them with more familiarity than modesty will allow us to relate: besides these, there was a young

gallant of the same city, more noble by birth than rich in estate and means, named Don Belthazer Monfredo, who, deeming Cecilia as chaste as beautiful, bore a singular affection to her; yea, his heart was so entangled in the snares of her beauty, that both in public and private she was the subject of his discourse, and the whole employment of his thoughts; and if he affected and desired Cecilia for his wife, no less did she desire Monfredo for her husband; so that many times, by stealth, they met, and conferred privately in remote churches and chapels, it being a profane and too frequent custom in Spain, as also, I am sorry to say it, in this country, to make heaven stoop to earth, and religion to impiety, by men courting their intended wives; nay, what is worse, oftentimes their courtezans and strumpets, in the places which ought wholly to be set apart for the sole worship of God.

The lady Catherina, her mother, being indisposed, Cecilia had frequent opportunities of going abroad in her coach alone to take the air, and as often as she did so, Monfredo assuredly met her, and at length resolved to give themselves to each other in marriage, Monfredo presenting her with a diamond ring, and she, in exchange, presenting him with a golden bracelet, they, in a solemn manner, calling God to witness, contracted themselves, and promised to become man and wife: but for some weighty reasons she obliged him to keep this a secret for a month, after which period he should be at full liberty to propose the affair to her mother, and her two brothers, Pedro and Martino.

When the month was expired, which
to

to the lovers seemed an age, Monfredo laid his suit in a most respectful and submissive manner before her mother; and likewise in proper terms acquainted her brothers with his affection for their sister, and with his best eloquence endeavoured to gain their consent to marry her. As for the lady Catherina, her mother, she, preferring wealth to honour and content, and therefore, considering the weakness of Monfredo's estate, and that by the death of his parents he was deprived of all future hope of raising his fortunes, did absolutely refuse to bestow her daughter on him in marriage; and the more to shew her dislike to his suit and him, with much warmth and choler forbade him her daughter's company, telling him she had already engaged her word and promise to Don Alonso Delrio, and that positively he should shortly espouse and marry her. Now although this sharp answer seemed to nip Monfredo's hopes in the bud, yet relying more on the affection and constancy of the daughter, than on the power and resolution of the mother, he did not yet despair. As for her brother Don Pedro, he loved his sister so tenderly, and had so much regard for her content, that he stood well affected to him, and promised to use every means in his power to bring his mother over to his side. But in her younger brother Martino, he found a contrary disposition, for he never loved his sister Cecilliana, and now hated Monfredo for her sake, and was therefore willing to assist the suit of Delrio only to cross her inclinations.

It may not be improper, before we proceed any farther, to give the reader some account of Delrio: he was a gentleman well descended, and a native

of the same city of Burgos, very rich in land and money, but at least fifty-five years of age, having a white head and beard, of a hard and sour countenance, and very bandy-legged. Yet, old as he was, he was so passionately enamoured of the fresh and blooming beauty of Cecilliana, that he thought her not too young to be his wife, and was in hopes that his great wealth would dazzle her eyes, and make her as blind to his imperfections as her mother: but she, having fixed her heart on Monfredo's youth and comely features, most deeply despised Delrio's frozen age, and disdained to join the spring of her life to his cold December, thinking him much fitter for his grave than the marriage-bed.

"And suppose, said she, Monfredo, whom my heart has selected and chosen for my husband, be not so rich as Delrio, yet all Castile, yea, even all Spain, well knows, that by descent and generosity he is far more noble; and when the virtues and perfections of the one are compared with the mean endowments of the other, there is as great a Disparity between them, as between the peasant and the prince. Wherefore, let my mother say what she will, Delrio what he can, and my brother Martino what he dare, yet they and all the world shall see, that I will be wife to none but Monfredo, and that he only, or the grave, shall be my husband."

The lady Catherina her mother, notwithstanding Cecilliana's aversion and obstinacy, laid her commands upon her, on her blessing, to forsake Monfredo, and take Delrio, urging the poverty of

the one, and the wealth of the other; what delight and content the one would give her; what affliction and misery was threatened by the other. But the affection of Cecilia was so firmly rooted in her heart, that she was deaf to these requests, and blind to all the reasons that her mother could suggest, to persuade her to accept of Delrio for a husband; and although her mother followed her like a shadow in all places to draw her hereunto, yet still she found her as resolute to deny, as he was importunate to request it of her, vowing she would rather wed herself to a nunnery than to Delrio. Her mother seeing her thus persevere in her resolution, related all that passed between them to her son Martino, who she knew loved Delrio as much as he hated Monfredo, or as Don Pedro loved him for his sister's sake.

Martino taking this advantage to strike two blows at once, vented his spleen against both his brother and sister, therefore he more than ever incensed his mother against the choice that his sister had made, alledging, that it would be much more for the honour of their name and house, that she were married to a nunnery than a beggar. The mother told him she was of the same opinion, and was resolved if she would not consent to marry Delrio, that she would see her cloistered. This resolution was not so privately taken but that Don Pedro, who aimed at his sister's content, having certain intelligence of it, resolved, if possible, to circumvent both his mother and brother; therefore sending to Don Alonso Delrio, to meet him in the Cordeliers church, he there assured him, that he had so much friendship for him, that he would advise

him not to run himself into an error, in seeking his sister Cecilia in marriage, since he knew he could not possibly obtain her, she being already firmly contracted to Monfredo, notwithstanding all that his mother and brother might tell him to the contrary. Delrio heartily thanked Don Pedro for this mark of his friendship to him, and told him, he should be always ready to deserve and requite it; then considering how much Cecilia had slighted him, he determined to think of her no more.

Martino, on the other hand, seeing Delrio refrained visiting his sister, enquired into the cause of it, which he soon was made acquainted with by Delrio himself; whereupon, with much rage and choler, he fell upon his brother Don Pedro, and so many bitter words passed between them, that they seemed to have forgot the name of gentlemen, much more of brothers. Martino's spleen and revenge was so much increased by this falling out, that he wished his brother Don Pedro in another world, and henceforth resolved to study some way to send him thither; thinking that if his brother was dead, and his sister pent up in a nunnery, he should then be sole heir to all the estate his father had left.

Full of these bad thoughts, he repaired to his mother, and informed her, that it was the policy of his brother Pedro, that had beaten off Delrio from any longer paying his court to his sister Cecilia, and through his close and treacherous dealing had prevailed on him to abandon her for ever; nay, leaving no art unessayed to incense his mother against both his brother and sister, he did with great earnestness persuade her to shut the latter up
in

in a nunnery, which advice she promised very shortly to put in execution; but first she sent for her son Don Pedro, and, with thunder in her voice, rebuked him for his double crime, first in persuading Delrio to forsake his sister, and then in encouraging Monfredo, against her consent, to pursue his addresses to her; adding withal, that notwithstanding his treachery, and her ungrateful disobedience, they should neither of them gain their ends, for she would immediately send to Monfredo to seek another wife, and Cecilia should have no husband but a nunnery.

Don Pedro thinking it his duty to bear this passion of his mother with as much temper as might be, modestly returned her this answer: "That he had not said or done any thing to Delrio, but what he could well justify, and knew to be not at all against his obedience to her, or his honour to the rest of the world; but his affection to his sister, and his concern for her future prosperity, had made him believe that Delrio was every way as unworthy of her as Don Monfredo was deserving; and therefore that it was both pity and shame that the wealth of the first should be preferred to the nobility and merits of the second; he prayed her to consider, that as Cecilia was her daughter, so she was his sister; and that he was so well acquainted with her disposition and inclinations, that, not to dissemble the truth with her, he thought her far more fit to be made a wife than a nun: that he was not ignorant that it was the policy, or rather the malice of his brother Martino, which had made these false impressions in her belief against himself and his sister Cecilia, for which base-

ness, if he thought him not more deserving of his scorn than his resentment, he would not fail to call him to a strict account."

Dona Catherina did not very well relish this answer of her son Don Pedro, but contenting herself with having delivered her mind and resolution to him at full, she left him; and having found out his brother Martino, to him she punctually related all that had passed between her and Pedro, whereat he was so much nettled afresh with choler, and inflamed with revenge, that what before he had been secretly plotting against his life, he now vowed to put in execution, and, next to that design, wished for nothing more than to see his sister take the veil of a nun.

Whilst thus his mother and he were in deep conference and consultation how to effect this last business, Don Pedro went to his sister, and finding out Monfredo, sincerely told them both all that had passed between his mother, his brother, and himself, in their behalf, bidding his sister, between jest and earnest, prepare for a nunnery, for that his brother Martino, and his mother, had decreed that it must be so. Cecilia could not refrain from blushing at the mention of a nunnery, having very little inclination that way; and told her brother that she hoped to find a way to deceive her mother, and baulk her intentions. Monfredo taking her by the hand, said, he hoped the same, and that his arms should be the only cloister in which she should be locked up; and that if her mother wholly abandoned her, he will receive and entertain her in his poor house with joy and delight, and preserve her honour equal with his own life, which should always be devoted to her

her service. Ceciliana returned him thanks for these courtesies, and so did Don Pedro, who, in requital, having promised him his assistance in whatever he should require of him, for this time they took leave of each other.

We come next to speak again of Dona Catherina, who was still constant in her hatred to Monfredo, and in her displeasure to Don Pedro and her daughter Ceciliana; but yet before she cloistered her up in a nunnery, notwithstanding all that her son Martino could say, she resolved to try if she could bring back Don Alfonso Delrio to revive his suit to her, by sending him the following letter:

CATHERINA to DELRIO.

I Am wholly ignorant why you thus forsake your affection and suit to my daughter Ceciliana, whereof, before I am resolved by you, I have many reasons to suspect and think, that it was as feigned as your promises and oaths pretended to be fervent. Sure I am, that as envy cannot eclipse the fame of her virtue towards the world, so truth dares not contradict the sincerity of my well wishes and affections towards you, in desiring to make you her husband, and her your wife. Her poor beauty (which you so often swore your heart so dearly admired and adored) hath lost no part of its lustre, but is the same still; and so am I, who ever wished, and ever will faithfully desire, that of all men in the world, yourself only may live to enjoy it. If you think her affection be bent any other way, you do her no right, but offer a pal-

pable wrong to your own judgment, and to my knowledge. Or if you imagine the portion to be but small, which I have promised to give, and you to receive with her in marriage, you shall command that augmentation from me, which none but yourself shall ever have cause to request, or power to obtain; yea, you shall find, that for the finishing and consummating of so good a work, which you so much deserve, and I so much desire, I will willingly be content to enrich her fortunes with the impoverishing of mine own. If you send me your answer hereunto, I shall take it for an argument of your unkindness; but if you bring it yourself, I will esteem it as one of your true respects and affections to me.

CATHERINA.

Don Martino having been solicited and charged by his mother likewise to write to Delrio, to win him back to continue his suit to his sister, sent the following hypocritical letter, and his avarice also made him desire that she might be wedded only to a nunnery.

MARTINO to DELRIO.

MY duty ever obliging me to esteem my mother's requests as commands, has occasioned my sending you this letter, desiring to know who or what hath so suddenly withdrawn you and your affection from my sister Ceciliana; you cannot be ignorant of my hearty well wishes and love to you, in endeavouring to obtain her for your wife, nor is it possible for you to conceive the hundredth part of the bitter speeches

“ speeches and affronts that I have been
 “ forced to put up with from her and my
 “ brother Pedro, in desiring it. I know
 “ that enforced affections prove common-
 “ ly more fatal than fortunate, therefore
 “ I am so far from any more persuading
 “ you to seek her in marriage, that I
 “ leave each of you to yourselves, and
 “ both unto God. And to the end you
 “ may see how much my mother is in-
 “ clined to your suit, and distates that of
 “ Monfredo to my sister, she, upon your
 “ forbearance and absence, hath vowed
 “ if you will not, none other shall ever
 “ be her husband, but that she shall im-
 “ mediately take the veil of a nun,
 “ and be devoted to a religious life.
 “ My mother was desirous to see you,
 “ to press this matter home, but as you
 “ yourself know, that marriages ought
 “ first to be made in heaven, before
 “ they are consummated on earth, you
 “ are convinced I am sure, that it is the
 “ duty of a christian to wait God’s pro-
 “ vidence, and attend his pleasure with
 “ patience.

“ MARTINO.”

Delrio having received and read these two letters, and, considering them with judgment, found that they looked two different ways, for Dona Catherina, the mother, would marry her daughter to himself, and her son Martino would marry her only to a nunnery, wherein avarice and the desire of wealth seemed to be the end that both of them aimed at, without having any regard to the young lady’s content and satisfaction. And although the discourse which he had with Don Pedro in the Cordeliers church, had so wrought upon him, that he resolved no

farther to seek Cecilia in marriage, yet, in common civility, he held himself bound to answer their two letters, which he did in the following manner, sending his answers by their own messenger.

DELRIO to CATHERINA.

“ **T**HOUGH you suspect my sincerity, yet if you will believe the truth, you shall find that the affection which I bore to your daughter Cecilia was fervent and not feigned; and because you are desirous to know the reasons why I forbear to seek her in marriage, I can give you no other but this, that she is far above what I ought to pretend to, and that I believe myself not worthy of her: for envy itself cannot eclipse the lustre of her beauties, nor fully her unspotted virtue. For your affection in desiring to have me for your son-in-law, I can make no other requital but thanks for the present, and my prayers and service for the future. How your daughter hath or will dispose of her affection, God and herself best know; and therefore I shall do her right to make no enquiry therein, but this I assure you, that if hers to me had been equal to the regard I had for her, I should then thankfully have taken, and joyfully have received her with a far less portion than you would have given me with her. To yourself I wish much prosperity, and to the young lady your daughter, all happiness: I must return this answer by your own servant, and whether you make it an argument of my unkindness or affection, in pleasing yourself you will no way displease me.

“ DELRIO.”

His Letter to Don Martino spake thus:

DELRIO to MARTINO.

" I Have, by my letter, given the lady
 " your mother, the reasons why I
 " desist from any farther seeking your
 " sister Cecilia in marriage; and be-
 " cause I know she will acquaint you
 " therewith, I hope that will suffice for
 " you both. I am as thankful to you for
 " your good wishes that I might obtain
 " her for my wife, as I grieve to under-
 " stand that you have received any bitter
 " words, either from her, or your bro-
 " ther Don Pedro, on my account.

" I agree with you in opinion that en-
 " forced marriages prove commonly fatal
 " and ruinous, in which belief, if you
 " and your mother continue, I hope you
 " will espouse your sister to Don Mon-
 " fredo, and not to a nunnery, because,
 " if I am not misinformed, her affec-
 " tions and inclinations assure her, that
 " she shall receive as much content from
 " the first, as disquiet and misery from
 " the latter. As your mother is desirous
 " to see me, so am I to serve her, and
 " yourself, if that lay any way in my
 " power. As you write religiously and
 " truly, that marriages should first be
 " made in heaven, e'er they are solem-
 " nized upon earth, so doubtless God
 " hath reserved your sister for a far better
 " husband than Delrio, and him perhaps
 " for a wife of less merit than Cecilia:
 " and thus, as a christian, I recommend
 " her with zeal to the providence, and
 " myself shall patiently wait the plea-
 " sure of Almighty God.

" DELRIO."

In regard to the former professions of his affection to Cecilia, Delrio thought he could do no less than take his leave of her in a letter; but charged the bearer to deliver it privately into her own hands, which he promised to perform. The letter was as follows:

DELRIO to CECILIANA.

" BEING here more informed by
 " your brother Don Pedro, of your
 " dear affection to Don Monfredo, and
 " your constant resolution to make him
 " your husband, I held myself bound
 " out of due regard to you, and my firm
 " promise to him, to cease my suit, and,
 " because the shortest errors are best, no
 " longer to strive with impossibilities in
 " persevering to seek you in marriage,
 " whom I see, both heaven and earth
 " have decreed another must enjoy.
 " When I consider my own age and
 " your youth with that of Monfredo's, I
 " am so far from condemning your choice,
 " that I both approve and applaud it,
 " and assure you, that you have my best
 " wishes for your prosperity; to convince
 " you of which, I will not conceal from
 " you, that I have received letters from
 " your mother and brother Don Martino,
 " who have some irregular design, which
 " they shortly intend to put in execution
 " against your future content and happi-
 " ness, and although they make religion
 " the pretext, if you do not speedily
 " prevent it, you will find that their ma-
 " lice to your lover Monfredo is the only
 " true cause of it. God hath endued
 " you with a double happiness, in giv-
 " ing you an excellent wit to second and
 " embellish your exquisite beauty, and
 " that

“ that, no doubt, will teach you to make
 “ the best use of this intelligence, and
 “ then, with the advice of your best
 “ friend Monfredo, and your noble
 “ brother Pedro, you may have all the
 “ reason in the world to expect you shall
 “ baulk the intentions of those who de-
 “ sign you no good.

“ DELRIO.”

The messenger first publicly delivered the two letters to his lady Dona Catherina, and her son Don Martino, and privately the other to the young lady Cecilia, according to his promise, and Don Delrio's request: as for the mother, she was grieved to see, that Delrio could not be reclaimed, but had quite forsaken her daughter: but for her son Martino, he was exceedingly rejoiced thereat, for now he was confident, that according to his plot, his mother, upon Delrio's refusal, would, in meer malice to Monfredo, assuredly commit his sister to a nunnery. Cecilia likewise was not a little rejoiced to find that Delrio so genteely relinquished all his pretensions to her, in giving her up to his rival Monfredo, and thought herself obliged to him for the advice he gave her concerning her mother and brother. She acquainted her brother Don Pedro, and her dear friend Monfredo, with this letter, who now plainly saw the resolution of Dona Catherina and her son Martino, to oblige Cecilia to take the veil; but they were all as resolute to prevent it. They could not but very courteously receive this civility from Don Delrio, and Cecilia held herself bound to return him the following answer:

CECILIANA to DELRIO.

“ **W**HAT my brother Don Pe-
 “ dro informed you concerning
 “ Monfredo and myself, was the very
 “ truth and sincerity of those affections
 “ wherewith God hath inspired our
 “ hearts, and sealed our resolutions to
 “ each other. As I was never doubtful
 “ of your good wishes and love, so
 “ now am I not a little thankful for your
 “ respect towards me, in letting me know
 “ you approve my choice, and in pray-
 “ ing for my prosperity; whereas the
 “ obstinacy of my mother, and the ma-
 “ lice of my brother Martino, without
 “ ground or reason, affirm it must needs
 “ prove ruinous. I have heretofore been
 “ advertised, and am now fully convinced
 “ that my mother and brother Martino
 “ have some undeserved design against
 “ me, and my future content; and al-
 “ though my poor beauty, and that
 “ small share of wit which you are
 “ pleased to commend, deserve not the
 “ praises which you bestow upon them,
 “ yet must I look upon myself as your
 “ debtor for them, as well as for the ad-
 “ vice you are so kind as to give me,
 “ and which I shall follow, by consulting
 “ with my brother Pedro, how to bear
 “ myself in an affair of such importance,
 “ whereon my future happiness or mi-
 “ sery depends. In the mean time I will
 “ pray for those who despitefully use
 “ me, as I must esteem and honour
 “ those who have shewn themselves so
 “ much my friends as you have done,
 “ without any merit to deserve it in

“ CECILIANA.”

When

When she had dispatched this letter to Delrio, Monfredo, by her consent, and the advice of her brother Don Pedro, held it very proper once again to try if the lady her mother could be prevailed upon to alter her resolution in his favour, and it was agreed between them, that at the time when he went thither, they would both be out of the way, and go abroad in the coach to take the air. Monfredo accordingly went the next day to Dona Catherina's house, and sent up his name; but she peremptorily refused to see him, and ordered her servant to tell him that she would receive no visits from him, and therefore desired him not to trouble himself to come thither any more.

To this answer, so uncivil, Monfredo, knew not how to reply, being so enraged; but at length getting the better of his choler, he told her woman that he would obey her commands, and trouble her no more, but that he should remain her most humble servant, and although she refused to see him, would always pray for her long life and prosperity. Don Martino was now at home, and could not help laughing in his sleeve, to see the entertainment his mother gave Monfredo, whom he expected would make him a visit also, but the other owed him not any such respect; however, knowing where Cecilia and her brother Don Pedro were to be found, he presently drove away to them, and related to them all that had passed, which was no more than they expected, and only excited their laughter: so staying out an hour together, they all parted for that time, but agreed to meet again the next day after dinner, in the garden of the Augustine friars, there to resolve on some way to prevent the designs of her mother and brother Martino.

The next morning Dona Catherina, still incensed at the presumption of Monfredo the day before, sent for her daughter Cecilia to her, resolving to deal roundly with her, to oblige her to forsake Monfredo for ever, or commit her to a nunnery. She laid before her all the dreadful consequences of marrying a man of his small fortune, than which nothing could appear more frightful to a covetous mind; nor did she forbear to make severe reflections on his moral character: but Cecilia, provoked at this unjust abuse of her lover, cut her off short with this answer, that it was in vain for her any way to seek to disparage Monfredo, or withdraw her affection from him; that how short soever his fortune might be of his deserts, yet those were unquestionable, and loudly proclaimed by all who knew him, therefore she begged that, although she was mistaken in her own judgment of him, she would speak of him with more respect for her sake.

Catherina, weeping to see her daughter thus obstinate, or rather thus constant in her affection for Monfredo, with frowns in her looks, and thunder in her voice, ran over a whole catalogue of infamous calumnies against him, and told her she should find a way to divert the stream of her affection, and turn it towards God; that she would not see her ruined in this world, but shutting her up in a nunnery, she should have time to think of her happiness in the next. But at the same time told her also she had better be advised, and accept of Don Delrio, with whom she might expect all the comforts that this life could afford. When her daughter Cecilia interrupted her, and, with a modest boldness, assured her that her affection was
so

so firmly settled on Monfredo, that she would rather beg with him, than live with Delrio in the greatest affluence and splendor; that although she had no bad opinion of nuns, yet she knew that the constitution of her body, much more of her mind, was very unfit for a nunnery; therefore she had much rather pray for nuns, than with them, much rather honour than imitate them.

Her mother, astonished at this reply, stood for some time silent; upon which Cecilia, making her a low courtesy, desired leave to depart, and so left her by herself; when she, after taking a turn or two to digest her choler, on seeing her daughter's firm resolution not to become a nun, sent for her son Martino, and related to him at full all the conference that had passed between his sister and herself; he was likewise much perplexed thereat, but putting their heads together, they vowed to provide a remedy, in a day or two, for this her obstinacy. As for Cecilia, she also reported to her brother Don Pedro and Monfredo what had passed between her mother and herself, when she met them, according to her appointment, that afternoon in the Augustine's garden: they could not help laughing at first, but then fearing least the malice of Martino should cause his mother to use some violence, to extort that from her by force, which fair means could not, they bade her be of good courage, and promised, that if her mother should attempt any such thing, Monfredo should steal her away by night, and that Don Pedro would assist her in her escape; and indeed their suspicions did not deceive them herein, for her incensed mother, being resolute in the design of making her a nun, confined her to her

chamber, which was now her prison, having made Don Martino her jailer; which being done before she had time to provide against it, made her weep and grieve exceedingly, and which her brother Don Pedro could not yet remedy; but acquainting Monfredo with what had been done, they, by consulting together, could find no better expedient for the present to release her from this domestic imprisonment, than by advising her to counterfeit with her mother, and pretend that she had changed her mind, and by God's direction had resolved to abandon Monfredo, and end her days in a nunnery. Accordingly Cecilia acted her part so well, that her mother was brought to believe she was really determined to be governed entirely by her will, and was infinitely rejoiced at this conversion, as was her brother Don Martino; and therefore, to fortify her in this religious resolution, they sent several priests and friars to her, to persuade her to appoint a precise day for her entrance into the holy house, which she did with her tongue, but her heart meant quite otherwise.

The mother now acquainted both her sons with this resolution of their sister, which was the next Sunday to give herself to God, and take the veil of a nun. Don Pedro very artfully seemed as strongly to oppose her design, as Martino applauded it, greatly extolling her devotion and obedience to God and her mother. When the day of her entrance drawing near, the lady abbess was dealt with by her mother for her reception, her cell provided, her spiritual apparel made, all her kinsfolks and chief friends invited to a solemn feast, to celebrate this our new holy sister's marriage to God and the church: but

whilst Dona Catherina the mother, and Don Martino her son, were very busy about the preparation and solemnity of this religious business, Don Pedro and Don Monfredo were taking another course, and making preparation for a more carnal affair, resolved to steal away Ceciliana the very night before the time prefixed for her entrance into the nunnery; of which they gave her notice, and fixed the exact hour when she might expect her deliverance.

Ceciliana, infinitely rejoiced thereat, when the appointed time drew near, made herself ready, and having packed up her rings, jewels, and bracelets, in a small casket, impatiently waited for her brother Don Pedro, who, lying in the next chamber to hers, was as vigilant as she; and when the clock struck one, and no one stirring in the house, but all hushed up in silence, he came to her in the dark, and taking her by the hand, they softly descended the stairs together, and getting by the postern gate of the garden, they found Monfredo joyfully ready to receive her, attended by two valiant gentlemen who were well mounted on excellent horses, with swords and pistols; then very tenderly taking leave of Don Pedro, he led her to a coach with six horses, provided for her escape, and then they all departed with the greatest celerity imaginable, while Don Pedro secretly returned to his chamber, softly shutting all the doors after him.

Don Monfredo, with his other self Ceciliana, and his two friends drove away to Valdebelle, a manor-house of his, about eight leagues from Burgos; and Don Pedro, the next morning, laid purposely long in his bed, the better to disguise his having had any hand in the clandestine

escape of his sister. About five or six o'clock her mother sent to her chamber to awake and apparel her, to receive some young ladies who were come to visit her, and to take their leaves of her, before she entered into the monastery; but the servant returned with this unlooked for answer, that the young lady's door was fast locked, and though she had knocked and called several times aloud, she could hear no one speak or stir.

The mother was amazed thereat, and no less was her son Don Martino, therefore they both run to her chamber, and, after having called many times without receiving any answer, they ordered the door to be forced open, where they found the nest, but the bird was flown. Upon which the mother stormed, and Don Martino, not a little incensed, told her, that he would engage his life that his brother Pedro was accessory to his sister Ceciliana's flight, and was gone with her; so they both run to his chamber, but found him in his bed sleeping and snoring, as he pretended, and they believed; their outcries awaked him, but they found him as subtil and as reserved in his policy towards them, as they were in their malice to his sister; so hearing their news, he put on his cloaths, seemed to be all on fire, and in choler thereat, proffered his mother his best endeavours and power to recover his sister, and to revenge himself on the villain who had stolen her away. But his brother Don Martino was so galled and nettled at the escape of his sister, and these words of his brother, that he told him to his face, in the presence of his mother, that his speeches and proffers were counterfeit, and himself a dissembler, and that it was impossible but he assisted
and

and favoured her escape and departure; for which uncivil and foul language of one brother to another, Don Pedro gave him the lie, and seconded it with a box on the ear, which the other received without making an immediate return, but was resolved to meditate a future revenge.

Don Pedro, after having asked pardon of his mother for suffering the transport of his passion to betray him into such an indecency in her presence, took leave under pretence of going to seek for his sister, and calling for his horse he rode over to her and Monfredo at Valdebelle, where he staid about eight days, in which time he saw them solemnly, but secretly married, and then, leaving them to their nuptial joys, returned to Burgos, pretending to his mother that he could hear no tidings of Ceciliana.

But now the presence of Don Pedro in his mother's house at Burgos, did but revive the old malice of his brother Don Martino against him, in revenge for the lie and the box of the ear he had so lately given him? the remembrance of which dwelt so strongly in his mind, that, forgetting all religion and even humanity, he re-assumed his former bloody resolution of murdering him, which he effected by the help of a pair of poisoned perfumed gloves, that he had purchased, and were so like a new pair that he had seen in his brother's chamber, both in shape and colour, that having made a secret exchange of them, Don Pedro mistaking them for his own, put them on, and wore them some hours, in which time the envenomed scent had such a fatal power, that he was found dead in his bed the next morning. Martino, the better to veil this damnable fact, gave out, that it was an imposthume

that broke within him, which occasioned his sudden death; and no servant of his own being near him that night, or any one who could disprove it, this report passed current, and his mother and his wicked brother ordered his funeral with more privacy than solemnity, and in a manner every way inferior to his birth and merit; but it is to be observed, that as she never had a perfect affection for him, therefore, his death was no great grief to her, and took but little care to pay any honours due to his ashes. But his sister Ceciliana was otherwise affected by his death, which she no sooner heard of than she shed a deluge of tears, and was so much oppressed with sorrow that it was thought impossible she could survive him: her husband Don Monfredo likewise did infinitely lament Don Pedro's death, as having lost a constant friend, and a dear and incomparable brother-in-law. He strove, but to little purpose, to comfort his spouse, for still she sobbed and wept, and still her jealous fears were ready to prompt her to believe, that it was the malice of one brother which had destroyed, and sent untimely to the grave the virtues of the other, and that Martino was the murderer of Pedro; but as she had only presumption, and no proof for this her suspicion, was therefore obliged to leave the issue and detection to God and to time.

Now we are to understand, that by this time Dona Catherina had certain intelligence, that it was Don Monfredo who had stolen away her daughter Ceciliana, and kept her at his house at Valdebelle, but as yet did not know that he had married her; wherefore being desirous of her return, not for any great affection she bore

bore her, but only to accomplish her former designs, to prevent her marriage with him, and to confine her in a monastery. To this end Martino set out for Valdebelle, without any letters but only a message from his mother to Cecilia and Don Monfredo, which having delivered, he vainly presumed to speak to them from himself. He first sharply rebuked her for her folly and disobedience in flying away from her mother's house; and then, with more passion than judgement, reproached him with dishonour in harbouring her; and told him, that if he had not made her his strumpet, the world would be apt to believe he had; that if he really had any regard for her honour, he ought to restore her to her mother and himself, who were the proper guardians of it, till she was otherwise disposed of by their consent. Cecilia's grief for her brother Don Pedro was renewed at the very first sight of Martino, but she was so much incensed at these rude speeches to herself and Monfredo, that she was going to make a hot and choleric answer; but considering better with herself, and also to prevent Monfredo from being too warm, whom she saw redening into anger, told him in general terms, that she now thought herself of age to be accountable for her own behaviour, or, at least, to chuse her own guardians, and therefore she should either return to Burgos to her mother, or continue at Valdebelle with Don Monfredo, as that gentleman should think fit, for his will and pleasure should assuredly be her's, as she knew him to be a man of strict honour, and as she had put herself entirely under his protection.

Before she had concluded her speech, she informed him, that she thought his

coming was to condole with her on the death of her brother Don Pedro, but to her grief she found he was not come to comfort but afflict her. Monfredo could no longer keep silence, but told Martino, with some austerity in his countenance, that if any other man had uttered what he had done against his own honour, and that of his wife, his rapier, and not his tongue, should have answered it; that his affection and regard to her was every way virtuous and honourable; and that she was, and should be safer at Valdebelle, than the life of her noble brother was in his mother's house at Burgos: that as the young lady, his sister, had referred to him the matter of her staying there, or returning home, he should be very far from persuading her to trust herself to her mother's protection, or to his courtesy, for that he feared they might be prejudiced against her. Thus, with cold entertainment and short ceremonies, Don Martino was forced to return to Burgos without his sister, where, as soon as he arrived, he reported to his mother the constancy of his sister Cecilia in her resolution, from which he thought it impossible to draw or divert her, because he found Monfredo strengthened her in it; but said, he could not inform himself whether he had married her or not, or whether he intended it.

Don Martino, however, was so cautious, that he told not his mother one word of what was said of his brother Pedro's death; but as soon as he had left her and retired to his chamber, he thought the more of it; and again, and again, remembering what hints both Monfredo and his sister Cecilia gave him concerning his sudden death, whereby they plainly intimated

intimated a suspicion of his murder. And as long as that suspicion lived in them, he knew he could never be in safety, therefore being bloody-minded, he resolved to stop their tongues by murdering them also.

As Monfredo seemed of the two to express the most choler, his intention was to begin with him; and then, as occasion or opportunity offered, to perpetrate his wicked design on his sister Ceciliana, without ever listening to the cries of conscience, or the remonstrances of nature. Now Martino understanding that Monfredo sometimes came privately to Burgos, he took much pains to find out when he was next there, of which being informed, about eleven or twelve o'clock one night as he was going to his own door, he, with his dark lanthorn in one hand, and his drawn rapier in the other, coming slyly up to him, run him twice through the body, with which mortal wounds he immediately dropt down dead in the street, having no servant at that time with him, nor sufficient warning to put himself upon his defence. Martino, as soon as he had acted this bloody tragedy, hastened home to his mother's house, and betook him to his bed, where the devil rocked him asleep, and as he deals with his other infernal agents, lulled him in a fancied security from all danger. The next morning at break of day, the breathless body of Don Monfredo being found in the street, all Burgos resounded of this his lamentable murder; but no mortal eye had seen, or tongue as yet could tell, who the murderer was. But the all-piercing eye which sees every action, did shortly bring him to light, by an accident as remarkable as strange.

Dona Catherina having heard of this murder, was so far from grieving, that she rejoiced thereat, no way doubting, but Monfredo being dead, she should with much facility, according to her desires, now draw her daughter Ceciliana to embrace one of the resolutions she would before have brought her to, either of marrying Delrio, or going into a monastery. In the afternoon the relation of this deplorable accident arrived at Valdebelle, and consequently to the knowledge of Ceciliana, who no sooner heard of it than she was like one distracted with grief, tearing her hair, and beating her fair bosom; then throwing herself on the floor, seemed in the agonies of death itself. She would see no light, nor hear of any comfort: so that although Monfredo's kinsfolks and friends did infinitely lament his unfortunate death, yet all their sighs and tears put together were nothing compared to those of his young wife, and now widow, Ceciliana. Her anxiety and affliction was the more desperate in that this new murder revived in her mind that of her dear brother Don Pedro, and she could think no other than that both her brother and husband fell sacrifices to the inhuman malice of her other brother Martino. This suspicion so strongly possessed her thoughts, that she was led to the resolution of making an experiment, which though prophane curiosity in some persons, sometimes seems to allow and practice as justifiable, yet sacred religion doth, and must for ever, reject and condemn as diabolical. Having disguised herself in mean apparel, she went very early in the morning over to one Alphonso Sanchez, a famous reputed wizard or forcerer, who dwelt at

Arena, about fix leagues from Valdebelle, and giving him the two pictures of her murdered husband and brother, as also a perfect note of their ages, she prayed him to shew her in a looking-glass the true images and representation of their murderers; and, to quicken his diligence, made him a present of ten ducats, upon the receipt of which he promised her to use his best art and skill to do what she requested, but after making her tarry till almost night, he put her off with this sham, that he had invoked and raised his spirit, from whom he could only have this answer, that God for that time would not permit him to shew her the murderer's picture in a glass, whereby this pretended wizard, proving himself more a cheating knave than a conjurer, only made a fool of the sorrowful young lady, in that she should not know what all christians ought to believe, "That it is not the devil or his agents, but only God, who, in his divine pleasure and providence, hath a power to reveal murders and murderers, but when and how it seems most agreeable to his omniscient and sacred majesty."

Ceciliana returning home with more doubts than she had before, was ashamed of her ignorance and impiety, and wept for meer grief to think that the foundation of her faith should have been so weak as not to rely constantly on the good providence and justice of God, but that she should let her foolish curiosity get so much the better of her zeal towards him, as to give any credit to the reported abilities of this knavish forcerer: but leaving her for a while to her sorrows in Valdebelle, we shall come to the wretched villain her brother Martino, in Burgos,

who having committed these two barbarous murders, did for the first two or three months after, put on a chearful and frolick countenance, thereby the better to blind the eyes of the world; but here the Reader is desired to observe one remarkable circumstance of God's providence, in detecting Don Martino to be the sole author and actor of these unnatural murders; for as the devil had made him so cautious in his malice and revenge, that he employed no other agent but himself, so being deprived of any witness to accuse him, God, out of the immensity of his power, made himself a witness against him.

As there is no felicity like peace of mind, so there is no true peace of mind without a quiet and innocent conscience; this is a precious jewel of inestimable value, it is a continual feast, than which nothing on earth can afford more delight; and the contrary is, when the conscience is touched with some foul and enormous guilt, especially that of murder, that peace of mind is never to be obtained, but despair, horror, and terror, do continually accompany our thoughts, and bear a gloomy evidence against us. Thus Don Martino had not fully passed over the term of three months in external mirth and jollity, but he dropped his chearful countenance, and God so distracted his wits, and struck such astonishment to his thoughts, that both night and day the ghosts of his harmless brother Don Pedro, and of the innocent Don Monfredo, seemed to pursue him for revenge; and now his looks were extravagant, fearful, and ghastly, the symptoms of a distempered brain; he knew not to whom or where to go for a remedy; he was afraid of every creature he saw, and of those who saw him not; if he looked back,

back, and perceived any one run behind, he thought it was a minister of justice to arrest him. He had not grace enough to go into a church, nor boldness enough to look up at the steeple, lest the first should swallow him up alive, and the other fall down on his head; if he walked in any fields or gardens, and saw but a leaf wag, or a bird stir, he was afraid some furies or executioners were coming to torment him; or if he heard a dog howl, or an owl whoot, he was thereat so suddenly appalled, that he thought it was the voice of the devil coming to fetch him away; he would not pass over any bridge, or go into any boat, for fear of drowning; nor over any gate or stile, for fear he should break his neck.

The sight of his own shadow made him start, and put him in a panick, and when any came out of charity to visit him, he fled from them as if hell was at his back, and Satan at his heels. The very sight of a rapier stabbed him to the heart, and the name of poison seemed to infect his very soul; yet had not this miserable wretch goodness enough to look into his heart with contrition, nor towards God with repentance. Dona Catherina, his mother, was wonderfully perplexed at this distraction of her son, and so were all his kinsfolks and friends in and about Burgos, who caused some excellent physicians and divines to visit him, and administer the proper means for the cure of his lunacy; but God would not permit either the skill of the first, or the powerful persuasions of the latter to take any effect. Two months were fully past while this phrenzy possessed him, and in one of the greatest and most outrageous fits thereof, he, without wit or guide, ran to St. Sebastian's church, and

having found out father Thomas the confessor, to him in private and serious confession, revealed how he had poisoned his brother Don Pedro, and also murdered Don Monfredo; adding withal, that God, out of his indulgent mercy, would no longer permit him to charge his soul with the concealing thereof; and then begged his absolution and remission for the same.

His confessor, being a religious churchman, much lamenting, and wondering at the foulness of these his penitent's two bloody facts, although he found more difficulty than reason to grant his desire; yet enquiring of him if there were any other accessory with him in these murders, and Don Martino freely and firmly acknowledging to him there was none but the devil and himself: he, after a serious check, and religious reprimand, in hope of his future contrition and repentance, gave him a sharp and severe penance, though no way answerable to his crimes, and so absolved him; and yet for the space of at least a whole month after, his lunacy, by the permission of God, still followed him; when, for a further trial of his comportment, and hope of repentance, God was again pleased to slack the hand of his judgment, and to free him from his madness and distraction, to see whether he would amend his life.

Not long after this, his confessor father Thomas, being curate of one of the neighbouring parishes, fell extremely sick of a pleurisy, and so dangerously ill, that his physician, despairing of his life, bade him prepare his body for death, and his soul for heaven and God: and then revolving in his mind what he had heard and seen, how grievously and sorrowfully the lady Ceciliana took the death of her brother

and

and husband, and the more in that she was ignorant who were the murderers, he was no longer able to burden his conscience and soul with concealing thereof, but resolved to write it to her in a letter. The which he charged and conjured his own sister Cyrilla to deliver into her own hands three days after his burial; the which she did shortly perform, for the priest father Thomas, her brother, lived not three weeks after.

In the mean time we come to the lady Dona Catherina, the mother, who having outwardly wept for the death of her eldest son Pedro, for the disobedient flight and clandestine marriage of her daughter Cecilia to Monfredo, who was now murdered, but by whom she knew not; and seeing her said daughter thereby made a sorrowful widow, she, as an indulgent and kind mother, forgetting what she had formerly done and been, and now desirous to comfort her, again sent her son Don Martino to Valdebelle, to solicit his sister to return, and live with her in Burgos, who detesting this project and resolution of his mother, was very sorrowful thereat; but seeing that she would be obeyed, he rode over to Valdebelle to his sister, and there delivered his mother's will and message to her, but in such faint and cold terms, as she thereby knew he was far more desirous of her absence than her presence, and of her stay than of her return; yea, and to write the truth of her mind, his very sight struck such flames of fear into her heart, and of suspicion into her thoughts, that she still assumed and retained her old opinion and confidence, that he was the absolute murderer of her brother Don Pedro, and her husband Don Monfredo; but herein she now held it discreet

to conceal her thoughts to herself, and so gave him kind and respectful entertainment; she prayed him to present her humble duty to her mother, and let her know that she would consider of her request, and either send or bring her resolution shortly; but inwardly in her heart and soul, she intended nothing less than either to hazard her content on the displeasure of her mother, or, which was worse, her life, on the inveterate malice of her brother Don Martino, whom we shall very soon see the judgments of God overtake; for the very same day, that he was at Valdebelle, his confessor father Thomas died; and about three days after, his sister Cyrilla, according to his dying order, rode over to the lady Cecilia, and delivered her the priest her brother's letter; at the receipt whereof Cecilia found different emotions in her heart, and passions in her mind; when, going into the next room, and breaking up the seals, found therein these lines:

Father THOMAS to CECILIANA.

“ **W**ELL knowing that the laws of
 “ heaven are far more powerful
 “ and sacred than those of earth; as I now
 “ lie on my death-bed, ready to leave
 “ this life, and to fly into the arms of my
 “ Saviour and Redeemer Jesus Christ, I
 “ could not go to my grave in peace,
 “ before I had signified unto you, that
 “ very lately your brother Don Martino,
 “ in St. Honoria's church, delivered unto
 “ me in confession, that he had first poi-
 “ soned your brother Don Pedro with a
 “ pair of perfumed gloves, and then after
 “ murdered your husband Don Mon-
 “ fredo with his rapier, in Burgos; and
 “ although

“ although I must and do acknowledge,
 “ that he was in his fit of lunacy and mad-
 “ ness, when he thus made himself a
 “ witness against himself, yet no doubt
 “ the immediate finger and providence
 “ of God led him to this resolution, as
 “ an act which infinitely tends to his sac-
 “ cred honour and glory. I send you
 “ this letter by my sister Cyrilla, whom
 “ I have strictly charged to deliver it to
 “ you three days after my burial, because
 “ I hold it most consonant to my profes-
 “ sion and order, that not my life, but
 “ my death should herein violate the seal
 “ of confession, and you shall shew your-
 “ self a most religious and christian lady,
 “ if you make this use hereof, that it is not
 “ myself, but God who sends you this
 “ news by me,

“ Father THOMAS.”

Ceciliana having read over this letter, and thereby understanding that her brother Don Martino was the cruel murderer, both of her brother Don Pedro, and her husband Don Monfredo, her grief thereat did so far over-sway her reason, and her malice and revenge her religion, as once she had a mind to murder him with her own hand, in requital thereof; but then again strangling that bloody thought in its conception, she vowed, that if not by her own hand, he should yet infallibly die by the hand of the common executioner: while love, pity, nature, reason, grief, sorrow, rage, and revenge, were acting their several parts, she found a great combat in her heart, and reluctancy in her soul, what or what not to do therein; when with many tears and prayers she had begged advice and counsel of God, she entered into this consultation with herself:

“ Alas, unfortunate and sorrowful Ceci-
 “ liana! it is upon no light presumption,
 “ or trivial circumstances, that I believe
 “ thy brother Martino to be the in-
 “ human murderer of Pedro, and thy hus-
 “ band Monfredo; for besides that, God
 “ ever prompted mine heart, and whis-
 “ pered my soul, that this was true, here
 “ is now his own confession to his ghostly
 “ father’s own letter and confession to
 “ me, to the same effect, evidences and
 “ witnesses, without exception, as clear
 “ as the noon day’s sun, that he, and
 “ only he, was the murderer of them
 “ both: but oh, poor Ceciliana! quoth
 “ she, to what a miserable state and per-
 “ plexity hath these his bloody facts and
 “ crimes now reduced thee; for as he hath
 “ murdered my brother and my hus-
 “ band, shall I then permit him to live?
 “ But withal, he is likewise my brother,
 “ and shall I then cause him to die?
 “ True it is, I cannot recall their lives,
 “ but it is likewise as true that I may
 “ prevent his death; for as the first lay
 “ not in my power to remedy, so the se-
 “ cond merely depends on my pity, cour-
 “ tesy, and compassion, to prevent: but
 “ alas, faith she, the ties of heaven are,
 “ and ought to be infinitely more strong
 “ than those of earth, and the glory of
 “ God to be far preferred before all our
 “ natural affections and obligations to our
 “ best friends, or nearest kinsfolks who-
 “ soever. Therefore, as to detect these
 “ murders of his, thou art no friend to
 “ nature, so again, to conceal them, thou
 “ thereby makest thyself an enemy to
 “ grace; for assure thyself, unfortunate
 “ Ceciliana, that God will never be ap-
 “ peased, nor justice satisfied, until their
 “ innocent blood be expiated, and washed
 “ away

"away in his, who is guilty thereof, be-
"cause, as by detecting murder, we
"blefs and glorify God, so by conceal-
"ing it, we heap a fatal curse upon our
"heads."

As clouds are diffipated and blown away when the sun ariseth and mounteth in his vertical lustre and glory, so Cecilia-
na having ended this consultation with herself, now began her resolution with God; and taking her coach she left Val-
debelle, and speeded away to Burgos, where instead of going to the lady her mother, she went directly to the corriga-
dor's, or criminal judges of the city, and with much grief and sorrow, her tears in-
terrupting her sighs, and her sighs her tears, before them accused her brother Don Martino to be the bloody murderer of her brother Don Pedro, and her hus-
band Don Monfredo; and for proof of this truth, produced the letter of Father Thomas his confessor.

The judges having read it, were struck with astonishment, and the more in re-
gard as they here saw a sister call in question the life of her own brother; but seeing she had as much right and reason for her accusation, as her inhuman brother Don Martino wanted for his malice, in making himself guilty of these foul and bloody crimes: wherefore attributing it wholly to the pleasure and providence of God, they highly extolled her piety and integrity towards his sacred Majesty, in preferring his glory before the scandal and misery of her wretched and execrable brother; and then, out of their zeal and honour to justice, they to evince and vindicate the truth of this lamentable business, sent away for Cyrilla, and, as soon as she came upon her oath propose

to her these three questions: first, whether she had this very letter from her deceased brother, father Thomas's own hand, and that he gave her charge and order to deliver it to the lady Cecilia, three days after his decease? secondly, if it were of his own writing and sealing? and thirdly, if she with her own hands delivered this letter to the lady Cecilia? To all which three questions, Cyrilla, with a staid look and countenance answered in the affirmative, and there-
upon with haste and secrecy they granted out a warrant to apprehend Don Martino, when he was, as it were, drowned in voluptuousness, security, and impenitency, as making it his vain-glory to build castles of content in the air, and to erect mountains of wealth and preferment in the Utopia of his ambitious desires and wishes, without ever having the grace either to think of his former horrible crimes, or future punishment for the same. He was amazed at his apprehension by the serjeants, but far more at the sight and presence of the criminal judges, before whom he was then brought. Having sharply accused him of the aforesaid murder, and for evidences and witnesses they produced him his confessor Father Thomas's letter, his sister Cyrilla, and his own sister the lady Cecilia; at the sight and knowledge whereof, he at the first seemed to be much appalled and daunted, but at last recollecting his spirits, assumed a bold countenance, put himself and his tongue on the points of denial and justification, and before his judges said his confessor was a devil and no man, and Cyrilla and his sister witches and no women, so unjustly and falsely to accuse him of these murders, whereof he denied

not

not only the act, but the very name and thought was odious and execrable to him. But God would not be mocked, nor his judges deluded with this his apology; so they adjudged him to the rack, the first tortures whereof he endured then with admirable fortitude and patience; the second he could not, but then and there confessed himself to be guilty, and the sole author and actor of both these deplorable murders; but yet his heart and soul was still so obdurate, that he had neither the will or grace to be repentant for the same.

For expiation of which his inhuman bloody crimes, the judges condemned him to be hanged, and his right hand to be first cut off, and burnt the next morning at the common place of execution, notwithstanding his afflicted and sorrowful mother, out of the natural and tender affection which she bore him, employed all her friends and possible power, yea, and offered all her own estate and lands to save his life, but she could not prevail or obtain it. So the next morning, in obedience to his sentence, this monster of nature, Don Martino, was brought to the common place of execution, to take his last farewell of life and the world: when his right hand, with which he held the rapier that murdered Don Monfredo, was cut off and burnt, he then ascended the ladder, where the spectators expected some religious speech, to shew his sorrow and repentance; but as he lived, so he

died, a profane and graceless villain: some words indeed he muttered to himself, but none that could be heard by the standers by, and then most resolutely putting the rope about his own neck, he saved the hangman his labour, and desperately flung himself off the ladder. Such was the bloody life and deserved death of this impious wretch Don Martino; and in this sort did the just vengeance of God triumph over his foul crimes, which may all true Christians read to their glory, and to the edification of their own souls, God of his infinite mercy grant.

If the curiosity of the reader makes him farther desirous to know what became of old Catherina the mother, and Dona Cecilia the daughter, after all these dismal and disastrous accidents, it may not be amiss to inform him by way of postscript, that the mother lived not long after, but her daughter was first reconciled to her, and she to her daughter, to whom, she having no other child, left her whole estate: and for her, who was now become likewise very rich, as having a fair yearly revenue and jointure out of her deceased husband Don Monfredo's lands, although she was again sought in marriage by some noble gallants of Castile and Burgos, yet she resolved never to marry more, but lived sometimes at Burgos, and sometimes at Valdebelle, in great pomp and felicity to a good old age.

GOD'S REVENGE

AGAINST

MURDER and ADULTERY.

HISTORY XXIII.

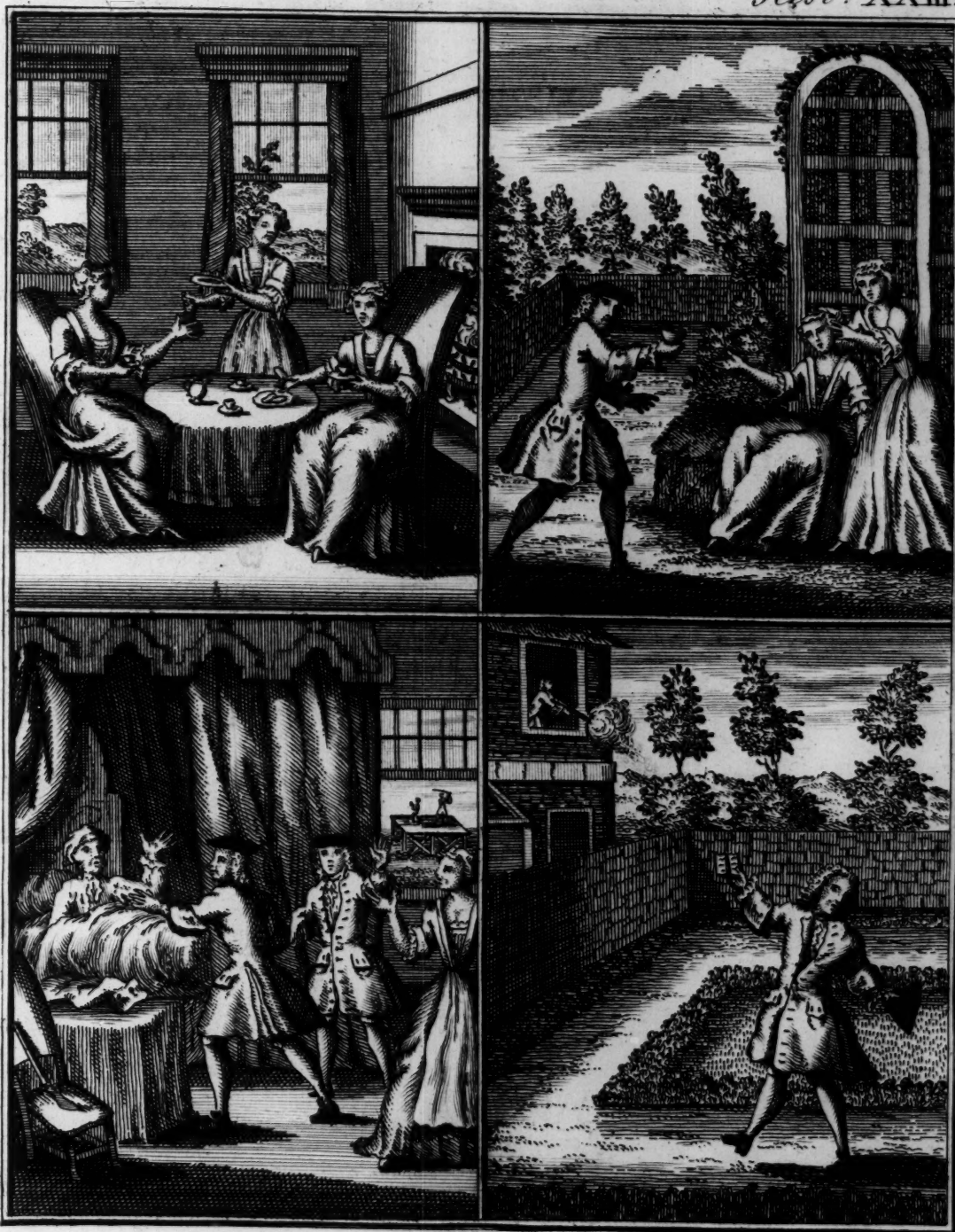
ARGUMENT.

Alphonso poisons his own Mother, Sophia, and afterwards shoots Cassino, as he was walking in his Garden, with a Carbine, from a Window; he is beheaded for these Murders, then burnt, and his Ashes thrown into the River.

IN the city of Verceli, bordering on the duchy of Milan, there dwelt a rich canon of that cathedral church, named Aloisus Cassino, who had a beautiful young lady to his niece, named Dona Eleanora, whose mother, Isabella Cælia, being the sister of Cassino, on her death-bed had left this her only daughter, with a very large fortune in land and money, to his care. And he was as tender in his love of her, and cautious in her education, as if she had been his own daughter, taking all methods to give her every accomplishment that could be desirable in a person of the first rank; which, added to the charms of her person, made her esteem-

ed the phoenix of the city of Verceli: Cassino, considering that his house was destitute of a matron to accompany and oversee his niece Eleanora, that his age was too stoical for her youth, and that his ecclesiastical profession and function called him often to preach and pray abroad, he therefore deemed it very unfit, in the interims of his absence, to leave her to herself, to be ruled and governed by her own fancy and pleasure, who was now arrived at twelve years of age; therefore he deemed it proper, having provided her new apparel, and other necessaries, a waiting-maid, and a man of his own to attend her, to send her in his coach to the city of Cassal,

in





in the marquisate of Montferat, to the lady Marguerita Sophia, a widow gentlewoman, left by her deceased husband but indifferently rich, but endowed with all those ornaments of art and honour, which made her famous not only in Piedmont and Lombardy, but also to all Italy; and to her he therefore wrote the ensuing letter to accompany his niece, charging his man with the delivery thereof.

CASSINO to SOPHIA.

“ **T**O satisfy your courteous requests,
 “ and my former promise, I now
 “ send you my niece Eleanora to Cassal,
 “ whom I heartily pray you to use as
 “ your daughter, and to command her
 “ as your hand-maid. She hath no other
 “ uncle but me, nor I any other acquaintance
 “ but yourself, with whom
 “ I would entrust her for education,
 “ and to recommend her for instruction.
 “ She is not inclined to any vice that I
 “ know of, except to those imperfections
 “ wherein her youth excuseth her ignorance;
 “ and it is both my order and charge to her,
 “ that she carefully and curiously adorn
 “ herself with virtues by your example
 “ and imitation, without which the privileges
 “ of nature and fortune, as beauty and wealth,
 “ are but only obscure shadows, and no true
 “ substances, because there is as much difference
 “ betwixt those and these, as between the
 “ purity of the soul, and the corruption of the
 “ body, or between the dignity and excellency
 “ of heaven, and the invalidity and baseness
 “ of earth. I am content to lend her to you
 “ for a few months, but do infinitely desire
 “ to give her to your virtues for ever;
 “ in which you will confer much happiness

“ to her, and honour to me, and consequently
 “ for ever bind her youth, and my age to you
 “ in a strict obligation of thanks and acknowledgement.
 “ What apparel, or other necessaries you
 “ deem her to want, your will shall be mine;
 “ God ever bless her in his fear, and you both
 “ to his glory.

“ CASSINO.”

The lady Sophia received this sweet young virgin with much content and joy, and seeing her tender years already adorned with such excellent beauty and virtues, caused not only admiration but affection in her, therefore she entertained her with much respect and care, as well for her own sake, as for her uncle Cassino's, whose letter she again and again read over, highly applauding his virtues and honourable care of his niece, whom in a few years she hoped would prove a most accomplished lady. When Cassino's coachman was about to return to Vercelli to his master, taking his leave of his young mistress Eleanora, she presenting her affection and duty to her uncle, with tears in her eyes, prayed him to remember her best service to him; the lady Sophia by him likewise sent the following letter in answer to his:

SOPHIA to CASSINO.

“ **I** Know not whether you have made
 “ me more proud or joyful, by sending me
 “ Eleanora, wherein you have given me far more
 “ honour than I deserve, though to her I fear
 “ less than she meriteth, who henceforth shall
 “ be as much my daughter in affection, as she
 “ is your niece by nature; and if I have any
 “ skill, or judgment in
 “ incli-

" inclinations, her virtues and beauty do
 " already anticipate her years: and I
 " do assure you, I shall account it both
 " my pride and my pleasure to be able
 " to give her any instructions that may
 " be of use to her in her future conduct
 " in life, when her years shall call her
 " forth to the notice, and, I dare say,
 " the admiration of the world; but if you
 " resolve not to give her to me rather for
 " some years, than to lend her to me for
 " a few months, you will kill my hopes
 " in the bud, and make me as unfortu-
 " nate in her absence, as I shall think
 " myself happy in her company. As
 " to cloaths and other necessities, I will
 " take care she shall have those suitable
 " to her rank, and such as you may
 " not think too expensive; for I will use
 " my best endeavours carefully to dis-
 " charge the trust which you have been
 " pleased to repose in

" SOPHIA."

Cassino did well to place his young
 niece Eleanora with the lady Sophia, but
 ill in forgetting, that she had a very de-
 bauched young gentleman to her son,
 named signor Alphonso, about twenty-
 two years of age, who, to her grief
 and shame haunted her and the house
 as a ghost, making himself the publick
 laughter and pity of all the different hu-
 mours of Cassal, by the lewdness of his
 life, and the irregularity of his conversa-
 tion and actions. Seeing so sweet a
 beauty, and so rich an heiress as Eleanora
 fallen into his mother's hands, vainly hoped
 of making a prey of her, and that her
 wealth would therefore redeem his pro-
 digalities, and revive his decayed estate
 and fortune, he secretly courted her: but

Eleanora, young as she was, saw his vices
 with disdain, himself with contempt, and
 his affection with scorn: and though he
 was importunate in his suit, yet was she
 perverse and obstinate in her denial, but
 resolved to conceal it from all the world.
 As for Alphonso, he, after six months
 time, acquainted the lady Sophia, his
 mother, herewith, and with his fervent
 desire to marry Eleanora; but she charged
 him on her blessing, never to proceed any
 further herein, without her consent and
 order; and, quoth she, if here in the
 presence of God and myself, you will
 now swear wholly to abandon all your
 former vices, henceforth to be absolutely
 led by my advice and counsel, and to
 steer all your actions by the rules of ho-
 nour and virtue, then I will promise you
 to use my best endeavours, both with Cas-
 sino and Eleanora, to effect your desires.

Alphonso hereat, with much courtesy
 and humility, thanked his mother, so-
 lemnly swearing to God and her, to per-
 form all these points carefully and punc-
 tually; and to add the more religion and
 reverence to this oath he did it on his
 knees, which was a wonderful joy to
 her, to see that the fruits thereof did ac-
 cordingly follow, and Alphonso in a few
 days became a new man. For this
 happy conversion she from her heart and
 soul praised and glorified God: and it is
 to be observed, if his mother Sophia was
 glad thereof, no less was our sweet young
 Eleanora for having got rid of her suitor.

Cassino coming over three several times
 to Cassal to see his niece, the lady Sophia
 gave him her best entertainment; he was
 glad to see that she had imprinted such
 characters of virtue and honour in her.
 During his stay there, Sophia charged her
 son

son Alphonso not to mention a word to Cassino of his affection to his niece Eleanora, therefore he behaved himself exceedingly modest towards him; and for his mother she held it fit not to speak a word hereof to Cassino. Cassino, no way dreaming of their intentions and desire towards his niece, told the lady Sophia, he was joyful to see that her son Alphonso had, by his behaviour and conversation, proved Fame a false and tattling goddess, for which she politely thanked him. Thinking then, to take time and opportunity at advantage, left not a virtue of her son's undisplayed, but extolled all to the skies, leaving the remainder to time, and the issue to God. Still resolving and ruminating in her mind, how, in a fair and honourable way, to obtain this rich and beautiful young prize for her son, and holding it discreet not as yet to mention it to her, she secretly laid wait at Verceli, to know when Cassino would have his niece home, and about three weeks before that time, thought fit to propose it to him, by letter, which she did in these terms:

SOPHIA to CASSINO.

“THE fervent affection and virtuous desire of my son Alphonso, to marry your niece Eleanora, is the sole cause and argument of this my letter to you, the which I had not attempted to write, but that I know his love and zeal to her is as pure as her beauty and virtues are excellent. He, without my privacy or knowledge, hath already mentioned his suit to her, and, as he tells me, she hath returned him a denial instead of her consent, whereof I held myself bound to advertise you,

“because his ambition and mind herein is so honourable, as it shall go hand in hand with your good will and approbation, but never without it; especially, as you were pleased to recommend her to my charge and custody, wherein I faithfully promise you, nothing shall be designed or practised to the prejudice of her honour, or your consent. All the estate and means which I can give, or you require of me, to make my son a fit husband for your niece, I will freely and cheerfully part with, and yet were I not fully and firmly assured that he is now as deeply enamoured of virtue and goodness, as heretofore he was of their contraries, neither my tongue or pen had dared thus to present his suit to her acceptance and your consideration. The joy and blessing of which marriage, if God in his secret and sacred providence resolve to make it such, will, I hope, in the end, be theirs, the honour mine, and the content your own; wherein I request your answer, and intreat you to remain most confident, that both in this, and in all things else, Alphonso's will and resolution shall ever be Sophia's, and hers, Cassino's.

“SOPHIA.”

Cassino, upon the receipt of this letter of Dona Sophia, was not a little displeased to see her ambition in desiring to marry her son to his niece Eleanora, and he was not unacquainted with the weakness of her estate, nor with her son Alphonso's debauched life, and corrupt and prodigal conversation, however she endeavoured to put a gloss upon them; he thought it discreet to seem ignorant of

of

of the one, and not to take notice of the other, and so made it his excuse, that he had already disposed of his niece, which he did in a very handsome letter, returned to her by her own servant. About three weeks after, considering the debauchery of the son, and the ambitious desire of the mother to advance his fortune, by a match with his niece Eleanora, Cassino thought it not safe to trust her any longer in Cassal, lest the old lady's cunning, and the young man's persuasions, might prevail upon her affection. He therefore sent over his coach, and one of his servants, to bring her home; at the same time wrote another letter to the lady Sophia to return his thanks for the entertainment she had given his niece, and the care she had taken in giving her many prudent and useful instructions.

CASSINO to SOPHIA.

“ **A** ccording to the notice I gave you
 “ in my last letter of my having
 “ privately contracted my niece Elea-
 “ nora to a very worthy gentleman, at
 “ his request I am enforced to send for
 “ her from Cassal to give her to him at
 “ Verceli, to which purpose I herewith
 “ send my coach, and desire you will re-
 “ turn her to me with your kind wishes
 “ for her welfare. Had it not pleased
 “ God to visit me with sickness, I should
 “ myself have come over, that I might
 “ personally have paid my respects to
 “ you, and returned thanks for the care
 “ you have taken of her, and the useful
 “ instructions you have given her, which
 “ is a debt of gratitude, which I hope
 “ she and I shall hereafter be able to dis-
 “ charge. In the mean time my best
 “ services attend yourself and son.

“ God give us all grace to live and die
 “ his servants.

“ CASSINO.”

As Cassino's first letter to Sophia, wherein he denied her son to marry his niece, did much afflict her, so his second, wherein he so suddenly sent for her, extremely tormented her, and her son Alphonso: for now their hopes of this young lady were frustrated, as she, according to her uncle's report in his letter, was contracted to some gallant of Verceli: Alphonso again laying before his mother the fervency of his affection to Eleanora, and representing unto her the extremity of the grief and misery which her refusal of him would give him, he intreated his mother to seek out some cure for his uneasiness, and that she would be pleased to try her wit and invention to change Eleanora's refusal, and her uncle Cassino's denial of him to be her husband: at last, his mother being much moved with his sorrowful complaints, she, before her departure break this motion for her son to her, wherein her wit and age sat upon the innocency and simplicity of Eleanora's youth, with the sweetest oratory and most delicious speeches and persuasions which she could invent; but she found her art to be ignorance, and her eloquence folly; for Eleanora was deaf to her requests, and dumb to her intreaties and persuasions, treating them only with contempt; and in detestation of his suit, would not hear any thing farther the mother had to say. Though Sophia could no longer hope for the niece's free consent, she was resolved once more to try the uncle, flattering herself with this hope, that what he had said of a pre-contract might be only a pretence to try her son's affection

affection and constancy towards his niece. Breakfast being over, while Eleanora was making ready for her departure, Sophia retired to her closet and wrote the following letter, and gave the young lady to deliver to her uncle; she and her son, taking their own coach, accompanied her three or four miles out of town; during which time the son, with many amorous sighs and caresses, and the mother with many tender and flattering speeches, assured her how great an esteem they bore her; then taking leave, Sophia and her son Alphonso returned to Cassal, and Eleanora home to her uncle at Verceli, who received her with much joy, and to whom she delivered lady Sophia's letter.

SOPHIA to CASSINO.

" **B**Efore I had time to answer your first letter, your second calls home your niece, the loss of whose company I account a great misfortune; but I presume what you say of a contract is only to try the affection of my son, or at least I hope it is not made so strong as no way to be broken. I will not say but that she deserves a person of higher rank and larger fortune; but thus much I will say, that no one can bear her a more sincere affection, or pay greater honour to her virtues. Think not then too slightly of him who thinks so honourably of her; and this I assure you, that if you will give her to him in marriage, there is nothing in this world which I enjoy that he shall not possess.

" In obedience to your orders, I now send your niece, but am afraid, from the shortness of her stay with me, I have not been able to do her the service

" that may deserve those thanks you are pleased so liberally to bestow upon me. My son was desirous to have visited you, or have wrote a letter, but I commanded his silence until your pleasure should be known; and hope you will prove as much his friend as he is your servant. So beseeching God to bless you and your's, I remain, with great respect,

" SOPHIA."

Cassino, upon perusal of this letter, perceiving that the lady Sophia and her son Alphonso were so far from giving over their suit to his niece Eleanora, that they prosecuted it with more importunity than ever, he not only called her respect towards him, but her own discretion, in question; and seeing that she doubted the truth of what he had writ to her of a pre-contract, and that she thought he might be prevailed upon to sacrifice his niece to the vices and prodigalities of her son; with some discontent and choler he wrote her the following peremptory answer, resolving it should be the last trouble he would give himself upon that account.

CASSINO to SOPHIA.

" **A**S I well hoped that your affection and judgement would have deemed my former letter to you, with respect to my niece's pre-engagement, a real truth and no evasion, so I cannot but be surprized at hearing again from you upon that head. As for your son's zeal and affection to my niece, be it as pure and sincere as you represent it, yet I cannot but think myself uncivilly treated, in that you doubt so much my honour as to suppose I can be prevailed upon, contrary to that, to take her a-

“ way from a gentleman of great worth,
 “ to whom I have in the strictest manner
 “ engaged her. As this was my first, so
 “ I assure you, you will find it my last an-
 “ swer and resolution on this account. I
 “ therefore must thank you for imposing
 “ silence on your son, who will find it
 “ but lost labour to attempt to bring me
 “ to any other conclusion. I likewise re-
 “ commend the same silence to yourself
 “ in this affair; but in any other matter,
 “ wherein I may be any way capable of
 “ serving you, your will shall be law to
 “ me, and all your letters received with
 “ the greatest respect, by

“ CASSINO.”

The lady Sophia grieved greatly, and her son Alphonso stormed at the receipt of this letter from Cassino, seeing that all their hopes of his niece Eleanora were overthrown; but although this flat denial had determined Sophia not to stir or intermeddle any more in the affair, yet as love was impatient, about three weeks after Alphonso besought his mother to ride over to Verceli once again, to try Cassino, and likewise renew his suit to Eleanora, hoping that her presence might procure that which her letters could not, and desired to attend her himself; both which requests his mother, after some scruples, granted him. Being arrived at Verceli, the mother courted the uncle, and the son the niece, but to no purpose, for they received a definitive sentence, which was pronounced with such warmth, that they even found it would be in vain to mention the matter again, without entirely losing the friendship of Cassino.

Upon this they returned to Cassal with much discontent, and Alphonso, thinking

it no longer useful to wear the veil of hypocrisy, threw it off, and again abandoned himself to all manner of vices and debauchery, from which he was not to be restrained by all the admonitions or persuasions of his mother. After some time, the remembrance of Eleanora coming fresh into his mind, he would fain have prevailed upon her to take another journey to Verceli, to see what alterations time might have wrought in the resolutions of Cassino, and his niece, which she absolutely refusing, and telling him she would never more either write or speak on that account, he was so much exasperated that he vowed revenge, and from that time meditated the death of his mother, which he determined to effect by poison.

This infernal wretch imagined, that when he had once dispatched her, and was become master of her estate, Cassino and Eleanora would pay more regard to his addresses; but herein he reckoned without his host, for the devil, who had got strong hold of him, was continually egging him on to the hellish resolution he had taken, and providing himself with a dose of poison, which he carried about him, he waited for a convenient opportunity to administer it, which he was not long without.

The lady Sophia his mother, being greatly afflicted at his having relapsed into his old disorders, was much affected thereby, and fell into a fit of illness, but when she was enough recovered to take a little air, she walked one afternoon with her son, and a maid-servant in her garden, where, being of a sudden taken with a kind of fainting fit, she entreated him to go to the house, and fetch her a draught, which her physician had ordered her to
 take

take on such an occasion, while the servant was busied in loosening her stays, and doing some other offices about her. The vile miscreant, glad of such an opportunity, run with all speed to fetch the bottle, but took care to infuse his diabolical ingredient into it before he offered it to his mother, who, little suspecting what was prepared for her, drank the fatal potion at two draughts, when immediately after a cold sweat spread over her face, with an extreme paleness; upon which the wretched hypocrite, feigning much concern, cried aloud for more assistance; a chair being sent for, she was carried into her chamber, and put to-bed, where in a few hours she expired, no one having the least suspicion of her being murdered, especially by her son, who shed floods of tears, as he pretended, for the loss of his dear mother. The better to cover his inhuman villainy, and screen it from the eye of the world, he made a most pompous funeral, the state and cost of which did far exceed their rank and quality, no gentleman or lady in and about Cassal being uninvited to assist at the ceremony.

The news of the lady Sophia's death soon reached Verceli, and was very much bewailed both by Cassino and his niece Eleanora, who had each of them a great respect for her, the uncle for her piety, and the young lady for the kind entertainment she had given her, and the many instructive lessons at Cassal, by the help of which, and her own natural endowments, she was now not only reported the most beautiful, but one of the most prudent young ladies in all the country, which with her own great estate, and that of her uncle, who had adopted her for his heir, there was no doubt of her having

been sought in marriage by divers young gentlemen of the chief families in Verceli. Of these Cassino had the greatest esteem for signor Hieronymo Brasiano, a very wealthy young gentleman, nephew and heir to the bishop of Verceli; that prelate, likewise approving of the choice on his nephew's side, gave his consent to his marriage with Eleanora; but as they were both very young, it was thought proper for some time to defer consummation, and their marriage was kept secret, he living with the bishop, his uncle, at Turin, the court of the duke of Savoy, and she, continuing with Cassino, in Verceli, only they corresponded by letter with each other, which was all the familiarity they were yet allowed to have together.

Alphonso, who had no sooner imbrued his hands in the innocent blood of his good and virtuous mother, but he, without any farther shew of sorrow or repentance, flaunted it out in gay apparel, swimming in the ocean of sensual delights and pleasure, and neither regarding his body or soul, consumed whole weeks and months among riotous companions, which practices began to lessen his estate; then, to repair the wastes of his prodigalities, he entertained fresh thoughts of commencing his old suit to Eleanora, and imagined he should have better success than heretofore, notwithstanding the peremptory refusal he had before met with: so riding over to Verceli, he again became a most importunate suitor to Cassina, and his niece Eleanora, but to no purpose, for they treated him with disdain: seeing that he pursued his solicitations beyond the bounds of civility or discretion, Cassino plainly told him his niece was already married; and therefore on that consideration he forbade him
his

his house, and her company, which dishonour, as Alphonso deemed it, he took in so ill part, that changing his reason into rage, vowed that he would murder Cassino.

There is nothing easier than to do evil; and as it is the nature, so it is the policy of Satan, as well to furnish us with the means, as the matter thereof; for when we cast ourselves from malice to revenge, and from revenge to murder, he then makes us industrious, first in the contriving, and then in the execution thereof: but in the end, God always so ordains it, that this hellish policy is turned to misery.

Alphonso's malice against Cassino would give no peace to his thoughts, till he had found out some way to perpetrate the inhuman villainy he had been contriving; being informed that every morning and evening he was accustomed to walk alone in his garden, for an hour or two in his spiritual meditations, he thought this a fit place to shoot him; and very conveniently for his purpose, there was a little tavern which joined to the wall of Cassino's garden, and had windows which looked into it, from one of which he resolved to put an end to the bloody business. About six o'clock in the evening he rode thither, and tying up his horse to the door, went into the house in disguised apparel, having purposely sent away his servants before him to Cassal, and going up into the chamber, he called for wine and something to eat, the better to colour his stay there, when bolting the chamber door to him, and putting aside the paper casement, which they use in Italy to expel the fervency of the sun, he plainly perceived Cassino walking in his garden, with his

hat in one hand, and breviary or prayer-book in the other: with which he was as busy with God in his meditations and devotions as Alphonso was with the devil, in charging his carbine with a brace of bullets; when without the least fear of God, or his punishments, he let fly at him, and both the bullets hitting him right in the breast, this religious old gentleman Cassino fell presently dead to the ground, none being in the garden with him. But this inhuman and bloody murderer, went not far before the judgment of God did surprize and overtake him.

As soon as Alphonso had given this bloody blow, and seen Cassino fall dead, unbolting the chamber, he resolved to take horse and fly away, but God presently struck him into a stupid swoon, and falling to the ground, the noise caused the people of the house to see what had befallen him, where finding him grovelling on the ground, and gasping for life, they thought he had shot himself, then laying him on a bed, they searched for the wound, but none could be found, and it was an hour before they perceived any motion or life in him. Then opening his eyes, with a distracted countenance, thinking himself on the very point of death, he cried out, that he had murdered Cassino, which very much astonished the people who were about him; but in a short time news was brought of the body of that gentleman being found in his garden, with two wounds in it made by a brace of balls.

Eleanora was all in tears, and the whole town of Verceli in a consternation: the friends and deceased made diligent enquiry after the murderer, and finding a horse tied to the door of this little tavern, went

went in, where they beheld the man of the house, his wife, and servants, all in a fright and amazement: then ascending the stairs, they discovered Alphonso in bed, with his carbine in a chair by him; upon examining the people of the house, they related the accident of his swooning, and confession of the murder of Cassino.

Here we must admire the providence and justice of the Most High, who entirely bereaved Alphonso of his senses, till he had made a discovery of the murder of Cassino, which was no sooner done, but he began to recover, when being put in mind of, and seeing the imminent danger he was in, by the presence of Cassino's friends, who were about the bed to apprehend him for the same, he with tears and bitter oaths recanted what he had before spoke, saying, that what he had said before proceeded only from his disordered brain, and that he was innocent of the fact; but this availed him little, all circumstances being so strong against him, that they obliged him to put on his cloaths, and carrying him before the criminal judges, he was by them committed to prison.

The next morning Alphonso was called to his trial, where he was charged with the murder of Cassino; but his heart was so hardened, that he not only denied it, but disputed the matter with great vehemence. The vintner, his wife, and servants, were produced as witnesses against him, who gave an account of his confession, also the report of his carbine, and the vicinity of their house to Cassino's, and of the prospect from the chamber window to the garden wherein Cassino was found.

The next evidence against him was the sorrowful Eleanora, who informed his judges, that Alphonso was a most importunate suitor to her, both in his mother's house at Cassal, as also at her deceased uncle's here in Verceli; adding withal, that she believed him to be the murderer of her uncle: but he still denied the fact with choler and indignation, whereupon he was ordered to the rack, at the mention of which he immediately, with tears, confessed his guilt, and was sentenced to have his head cut off the next day.

At night he was attended by some priests and friars, who prevailed upon him to disburden his conscience, by making a free confession of all his sins; to which end, he divulged to them the shocking crime of murdering his mother at Cassal, for which he begged absolution from them, and forgiveness of God, acknowledging that he scarce knew how to ask, or expect mercy from heaven.

The following day he was brought to the place of execution before a vast concourse of people, to whom he made a short speech, acknowledging his crimes, and the justice of God in the punishment of them, wishing, that he had never neglected his duty towards him, nor forsaken his house and worship for the company of profligate rakes and harlots. Then turning to the virtuous Eleanora, he besought her to forgive him the murder of her uncle; after which recommending himself into the hands of his Redeemer, he bade the executioner do his office, who, with his sword, in an instant, severed his head from his body, which were both burnt, and the ashes thrown into the river Ticino, without the walls of Verceli.

G O D ' s R E V E N G E

A G A I N S T

M U R D E R and A D U L T E R Y .

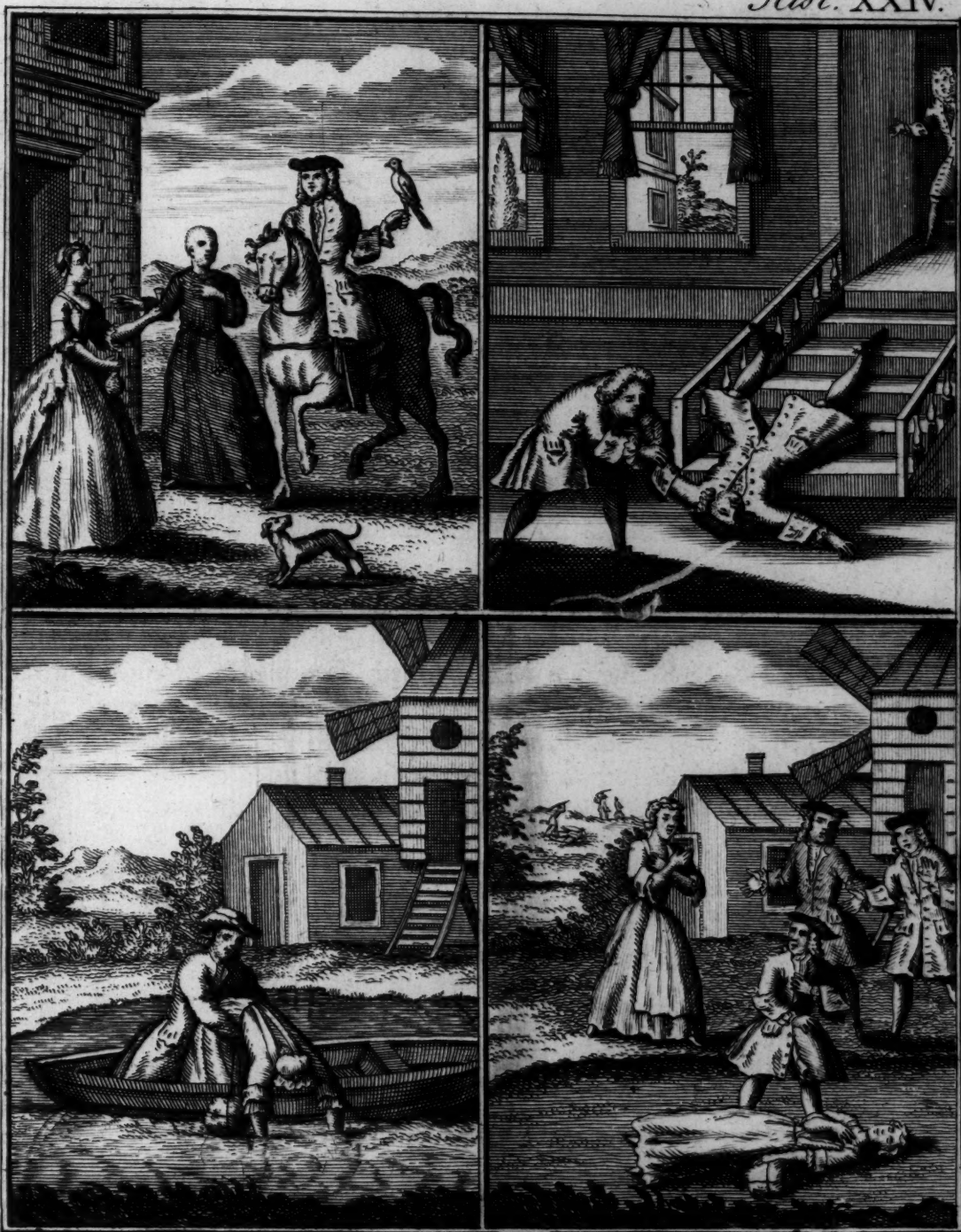
H I S T O R Y XXIV.

A R G U M E N T .

Pont-Chaufey kills La Roche in a Duel. Quatbriffon causeth Montcallier, an Apothecary, to poison his Brother Valfontaine. Montcallier afterwards falls down a Pair of Stairs, and breaks his Neck. Quatbriffon likewise causeth his Father's Miller, Pierot, to strangle Marieta in her Bed, and throw her Body into the Mill-Pond. Pierot, the Miller, is broke alive on a Wheel, and Quatbriffon first beheaded, and then burnt for the same.

IN the city of Vannes, in the province of Bretagne in France, there dwelt a noble and wealthy gentleman; named monsieur de Caerstaing, who by his wife, madam de la Ville Blanche, had two sons, the eldest named Quatbriffon, and the youngest Valfontaine. The first, about twenty-four years of age, the second, about twenty, both of them accomplished gentlemen, as well in their personages, as the inward perfections and endowments of their minds. Valfontaine lived in the city of Nantz with an uncle

named M. de Manfie, President of the king's chamber of accounts, and frequenting balls and publick diversions, among many other excellent beauties he saw a young lady there, that with a kind of commanding power, attracted all eyes. Among the rest, Valfontaine, whose youthful heart had never yet paid any offerings to the shrine of love, was so much smitten with her charms, that he could not keep from gazing on the roses and lillies of her complexion, nor forbear strictly to enquire her name and residence ;
when





when being informed that she was the only daughter and rich heiress of a noble gentleman, named M. de Pennelle, of St. Agnau, and her name La Pratiere, of the age of seventeen, he, from that instant, declared himself her suitor; and like one skilled in the art of love, carefully sought every opportunity of enjoying her company, inasmuch that she could scarce be anywhere that he was long absent.

If Valfontaine tenderly loved La Pratiere, no less was she delighted with him; for knowing him to be the son of a gentleman of noble extraction and great worth, and seeing him wise, discreet, and a handsome man, that although her tongue was too modest to reveal her affection, yet her eyes, the ambassadors of her heart, could not but in dumb eloquence betray it to him. By the presents and letters which interchangeably passed between them, their youthful affections were cemented, and vowed they would only live for one another; but La Pratiere told him he must, in the most respectful manner, get her father's consent, which he promised, and as soon as she left Nantes to go home to her father, Valfontaine was not many days behind her, when he acquainted him with the tender affection he had for his daughter, and begged his consent to marry her.

M. de Pennelle entertained him very courteously for two or three days, but his suit was not at all pleasing to him; for although he knew Monsieur de Caerstaing his father to be every way his superior, both in quality and fortune, yet as La Pratiere was his only child and heir, and Valfontaine but a cadet or younger brother, his covetousness would not consent to let him have him for a son-in-law; so

when he took his leave he parted civilly with him, but gave him so cold an answer to his suit, as seemed little better than a flat denial.

Being returned from St. Agnau, where La Pratiere lived, he acquainted his father and mother with his affection and suit to her, whose father they knowing to be both rich and noble, very much approved his choice; whereupon Valfontaine besought his father to go to M. de Pennelle, to confer with him about the business, hoping his presence might accomplish that which he was doubtful his own abilities could perform. But although the old gentleman wished to procure his son's advancement and content by this marriage, yet being at that time much troubled with the gout, excused himself from the desired journey till another opportunity. Valfontaine being disappointed herein, intreated the like favour of his brother Quatbriffon, to whom he fully related what had passed between him and M. de Pennelle, but concealed upon what terms he stood with La Pratiere, or that she was any way his by contract. Quatbriffon readily yielded to his brother's request, and having their father's letter, took horses and rode to St. Agnau, where they arrived just before dinner; and having first saluted the father and then the young lady, he was quite struck with the sweetness of her behaviour and beauty.

Dinner being over, Quatbriffon gave his father's letter to Pennelle, and after a slight conference with him concerning his brother's suit to his daughter, turned to the young lady, who dying her cheeks with a roseate blush, he was all inflamed, and asking her to take the air of the garden, where her father and his brother expected

pected them, she gave him her hand, who conducted her to them; but Valfontaine in complaisance kept at a distance, because he was assured his brother Quatbriffon's Intention was to speak to her in his favour.

The first request of Quatbriffon to La Pratiere, was to swear secrecy to what he had to tell her, when he would, on that condition, reveal somewhat which infinitely concerned her future happiness. La Pratiere wondering at the nature of his first request, and what it could mean, for some time stood mute; but at last considering, that Valfontaine was her lover, and Quatbriffon his brother, imagined a contrivance between them, that if her father would not comply with their desires, they had resolved to steal her away, and have a clandestine marriage. Thus having satisfied herself, and induced by female curiosity to have the mystery unfolded, she granted his request. Quatbriffon then, with a deep sigh told her, that her incomparable beauty had captivated and made him, from the moment he first saw her, her tributary and vassal, and envied his brother's happiness of seeing her before himself; that as he was superior in years, so he was in his affection to her, and that he knew his brother unworthy of her, as not being heir to any estate. La Pratiere, whose faithful affection looked another way, little dreamed of what she now heard, and was so incensed at this unexpected declaration, that she was not able to bridle her resentment, but immediately returned him this sharp answer: "To have offered
" this unkindness to a friend would have
" been ignoble and treacherous, but to
" a brother seems unnatural; therefore
" know this from me, that I esteem your
" title of elder brother as inferior to Val-

fontaine's virtues, as they are in all respects superior to yours; and had you not tied up my tongue to silence, by deceiving my expectations, I would this instant have published your falshood to the wonder and detestation of all good men." Then with a frown of anger and disdain, she instantly left him alone in the garden to reflect on his baseness.

Quatbriffon bit his lip at this repulse of La Pratiere, yet resolved not to leave her so; but hoping to find the father more tractable and propitious to his suit than the daughter, he sought him out, and in fair terms informed him of his affection and love to her, and that, notwithstanding his brother's research, he himself wished her to be his own wife. Old Pennelle being more covetous of his daughter's preferment, than careful of her content, gave an attentive and pleasing ear to this offer of Quatbriffon, and was so delighted with the proposal, that already in his heart he wished her married to him.

The better to effect and compass this match, so much wished for by Quatbriffon, and desired by Pennelle, he, in the absence of Valfontaine, sent for his daughter into his closet, and shewed what happiness and preferment was now offered her, if she would forsake Valfontaine and accept of his elder brother Quatbriffon for her husband. La Pratiere, very much moved and grieved at her father's proposition, besought him, that if ever he regarded her content, Valfontaine might be her husband, because she confessed she loved the younger brother, but neither could or would the elder. This resolute and obstinate answer very much vexed her father, yet hoping that time might be able to draw her to his desires, he secretly

cretly advised Quatbriffon to go home to Vannes, and take his brother with him, and to return soon to Agnau without him, desiring him to trust to his management in his absence. Quatbriffon followed this advice, and they both took their leaves for the present. Quatbriffon was as much grieved at the daughter's refusal as he was rejoiced in his success with the father, but secretly pursued his treachery to his brother, by assuring him, that he had used his best endeavours, and solicited Pennelle in the strongest manner to listen to his pretensions, but found it impossible to bring him to reason; adding, that he was so far from encouraging his suit, that he almost forbade him his house; therefore "Brother, said he, I would advise you to make yourself easy, and if the affair should not be accomplished, not to lay it too much to heart; but on the contrary, if heaven has decreed it shall be a match, you will find some opportunity to effect it, in spite of the father's perverseness."

The fair La Pratiere, seeing all things bent to cross her own desires and Valfontaine's, resolved to give him a private meeting, and the night before he went away, she sent for him into her chamber, and there assured him, that when he was got to Vannes she would send him a letter to acquaint him with all that passed, for that in life or death she was resolved to be his. This declaration he received on his knees, giving her, at the same time, a diamond ring off his finger, and she, in return gave him a pearl bracelet from her arm, in token of their mutual constancy and affection to each other.

La Pratiere could not but be much afflicted at being so soon deprived of her

dear Valfontaine's company, so she could not help smiling to remember how ungratefully Quatbriffon had been at work to supplant him; but measuring the integrity of one by the treachery and baseness of the other, and likewise remembering her promise to write to Valfontaine, in about two days she sent him the following letter:

LA PRATIERE to VALFONTAINE.

"MY promise owes you this letter, whereby I give you to understand, that I know not whether you have greater cause to love me, or hate your brother, who has, with unaccountable assurance and treachery, attempted to rob you of my affection, by professing himself my admirer; but when I inform you of this, I dare say you will believe that I received him and his addresses with the utmost contempt. He hath won my father to his desires, but rest assured, my dear Valfontaine, that he shall never make any impression on me: and although my father has forbade you his house, yet his daughter will ever retain and cherish you in her heart. Manage this your La Pratiere's advice with discretion towards my father, and not with choler towards your brother. Have but a little patience, and we shall find, that our sincere love and constancy will prove as much his shame as our glory.

"LA PRATIERE."

Valfontaine having received this letter, the base ingratitude of his brother so extremely tormented him, and threw him into such passions of anger and revenge, that he thought of doing himself right by

sending him a challenge, vowing, that the bonds of nature were not so strong as those of love, and that as his brother was the first aggressor, and thrown off all natural affection, he was justifiable in such a proceeding; but considering his dear La Pratiere's injunction, and prohibition from choler, this last reason overruled him. Not yet determined what course to take, he held himself obliged in the mean time to send the following answer by her own messenger, in return for her kind and courteous letter:

VALFONTAINE to LA PRATIERE.

" **O**F all men living, I least thought
 " my brother would have proved
 " my rival, since he well knew my love
 " to you. His treachery is so odious and
 " strange to me, that it would far exceed
 " my belief, if the information of it had
 " come any other way than from your
 " faithful letter, the knowledge of it both
 " shocked and astonished me: neither is
 " it any thanks to him that he missed his
 " villainous aim, in missing you, but to
 " your own virtue that viewed him with
 " detestation as much for his baseness, as
 " for your constant affection to me: my
 " dearest La Pratiere, if I am grieved
 " that he has won the father, I triumph
 " and rejoice that I have not lost the
 " daughter; but why talk I of losing
 " you, since to call your constancy in
 " question is no less than prophaning
 " your spotless truth and affection? I
 " can retain no fear for being banished
 " your father's house, while you assure
 " me I have a sanctuary in your heart. I
 " have with difficulty restrained my cho-
 " ler, and had it not been for your com-
 " mands my sword before this time had

" done me justice. I will still observe
 " your father with respect, and for my
 " ungrateful and treacherous brother, let
 " his own conscience punish him, and
 " the affliction it will give him to see the
 " happiness of

" VALFONTAINE."

A few days after La Pratiere was made joyful with this answer of Valfontaine, she had the mortification of seeing Quatbrisson arrive a second time at her father's house, having pretended to his brother at Vannes, that he was taking a journey another way. Renewing his suit to the father and daughter, he found them both in the same humour and resolution he left them; Quatbrisson offered her many rich presents, but she peremptorily refused all. When he thus apparently perceived that she protested both to her father and himself, only to marry his brother Valfontaine or her grave, and seeing his addresses to her in vain, taking leave of them he rode home to Vannes; but as close as he kept the secret of his journey from Valfontaine, yet La Pratiere thought herself obliged to acquaint him with it, which she did the very next day by a second letter.

LA PRATIERE to VALFONTAINE.

" **I** hold it part of my duty and affec-
 " tion to advertize you, that for these
 " two days I have again been haunted
 " and solicited by your brother, but he
 " hath found my first answer the same as
 " my last; and I have so nipt his vain
 " hopes in their bud, by letting him and
 " my father know my infallible resolu-
 " tion either to wed you or my grave,
 " that I believe by this time they are con-
 " fident nothing can make me alter it.

" If

" If your brother will continue to expose
" his folly by exercising my patience,
" and make himself as troublesome to me
" as he has been treacherous to you, out
" of the dear affection I bear to Valfon-
" taine, I will fall upon my knees to my
" father, and beg him to hasten our mar-
" riage, which is the only thing that can
" give me content; in this I hope, nay,
" I dare say, you are of the same opinion
" with

" LA PRATIERE."

Valfontaine received this second letter both with smiles and frowns, with smiles to see her inviolable constancy and affection; with frowns to behold his brother's malice and treachery, which he resolved to tax him with, and endeavour to prevail upon him to quit his pretensions to La Pratiere, but first thought himself obliged to return the following answer to her letter.

VALFONTAINE to LA PRATIERE.

" **I**T was your sincere affection, and not
" your duty, which again informed
" me of my brother's perseverance in en-
" deavouring to deprive me of your
" heart, wherein is lodged my sovereign
" felicity on earth. Your resolution in
" nipping his hopes, and your father's
" will in the bud, by electing me for
" your husband, doth so ravish my heart
" with joy, that I cannot help thinking
" God hath reserved La Pratiere to be
" Valfontaine's alone, as Valfontaine is
" only her's. But as I know not whether my
" unkind and treacherous brother will yet
" farther exercise your patience by his im-
" portunity, so to save you that labour
" and pittance, which for my sake you
" are ready to impose on yourself, I am
" both willing and resolved, not only to

" fall on my knees to your father, but
" also to your sweet self, to beg that our
" marriage may be hastened; for, as your
" resolution herein is and ever shall be
" mine, so our hearts and thoughts sym-
" pathizing in this desire, I hope we shall
" soon find it accomplished.

" VALFONTAINE."

Having dispatched this letter to his lovely mistress, he now resolved to have some conference with his brother, to see what excuse he could make to answer the ingratitude he had to charge him with; but Quatbriffon's policy anticipated it, for he having his heart fixed on La Pratiere's beauty, at last determined to feign himself sick, and then to reveal his passion to his brother, and assure him that was the cause of his present disorder. To which purpose he kept his bed, and in perfect health was twice let blood, that he might the better seem what he pretended to be; and sending for his brother to his chamber, desired every once else to leave it, acquainted him how tenderly he loved La Pratiere, and that from the first moment he saw her his passion every day increased, and must end only with his life, unless she would listen to his suit; and prayed by all the ties of friendship and the same blood that flowed in their veins, that to preserve his life he would resign the interest he pretended to have in her, and that in requital, if occasion should require it, he should always find him ready to expose his life and fortune for his service. A proposition so void of sense and reason highly incensed Valfontaine, who, with a look of disdain, returned him this answer: " Was it not
" enough that I understood your treachery
" by

“ by my faithful La Pratiere, but you
 “ must become wicked enough to pro-
 “ claim your own baseness and folly? no
 “ Quatbrisson, henceforth I disclaim the
 “ name of brother, and give you to know,
 “ that both in love and honour she is only
 “ mine, and shall see you die before I
 “ will permit you to be enriched by my
 “ losing her, whom I value and love more
 “ than all the world besides.” Having
 uttered these words with much heat, he
 hastily went out of the chamber from him.

Quatbrisson seeing his brother's abrupt
 departure, in his heart vowed revenge,
 and swore to make him repent it. For-
 saking his bed, and abandoning his
 counterfeit illness, his choler hardly al-
 lowed his patience three days to recover
 his blood and strength, and knowing his
 brother was gone to his uncle at Nantz,
 sought out an intimate friend of his, one
 monsieur La Roche, who he engaged to
 be his second in a duel with his brother.
 Both riding over to Nantz, they came to
 a small village called St. Vallery, within
 a league of that city, where Quatbrisson
 wrote a challenge to his brother, which
 he sent by La Roche; who, coming to
 Nantz, found out Valfontaine at his uncle's
 house, in company with a very intimate
 friend of his named monsieur de Pont
 Chaufey, he delivered his brother's chal-
 lenge fast sealed which he hastily broke
 open, and read as follows:

QUATBRISSON to VALFONTAINE.

“ SINCE it is impossible for us both
 “ to enjoy the fair La Pratiere as a
 “ wife, it is fit that one of us die,
 “ that the survivor may enrich himself
 “ with so inestimable a treasure: in con-
 “ sideration of which, think it not strange

“ that my strong affection should get the
 “ better of the ties of blood, and that I
 “ should answer your malice and con-
 “ tempt with resentment and disdain, by
 “ inviting you and your second to meet
 “ me and mine with your single rapiers,
 “ to-morrow between Two and Three in
 “ the afternoon, in the meadow at the
 “ east end of St. Vallery, where you will
 “ find this gentleman, whom I have
 “ prayed to be the bearer hereof, and
 “ he will safely conduct you to me; who
 “ shall impatiently expect you. I desire
 “ no answer but yourself, neither do I
 “ in the least doubt of your meeting
 “ me, since by birth you are noble, and
 “ by inclination pretend to be generous.

“ QUATBRISSON.”

Valfontaine could not help smiling
 when he read this challenge, and at his
 brother's weakness and folly; then turning
 to La Roche, prayed him to return his
 brother this answer; that to-morrow at
 the hour and place, he, with his friend
 Pont Chaufey, would not fail to meet
 them. La Roche having received this
 answer, rode back to St. Vallery, and
 acquainted Quatbrisson with his brother
 Valfontaine's resolution to meet and fight
 him the next day.

At the time and place the combatants
 met, and drawing their swords approach-
 ed each other, when Valfontaine, with-
 out being touched himself, gave Quat-
 brisson a wound in his right thigh, and
 if his rapier had not beaten down the
 thrust, it had nailed him to the ground.
 At the second rencounter they were both
 hurt, Quatbrisson in the right arm, and
 Valfontaine in the neck; Quatbris-
 son not as yet despairing, nor Valfontaine
 triumphing

triumphing or assuring himself of the victory. The sight of their blood was so far from abating their courage, that it rather increased their spleen and animosity, so traversing the ground they approached nearer each other, when Valfontaine made a home thrust at him, which entered betwixt his short ribs, and making the blood stream forth, did soon quail his courage, so that he who just before thought himself master of his brother's life dreaded now for his own; and thinking he had done enough, as well to secure his reputation from the scandal of his friends, as to give a proof of his valour to his enemies, throwing away his rapier, with more wisdom than was thought honour among duellists, he begged his life of his brother, vowing to forsake La Pratiere, and love him as much as he had before hated him; but this cowardice of his was so far from being relished or approved by the spectators, that it was the wonder of Valfontaine, and the laughter of all present. However Valfontaine was as benign as Quatbrisson was base and treacherous; but upon his submission, sheathing his sword, he gave him his life, the two brothers, with many civil expressions, embraced one another, and were to all outward appearance again reconciled, and as good friends as ever.

Monsieur de Caerstainge and his lady being informed of their son's quarrel at St. Vallery, and of the cause thereof, condemned Quatbrisson for his treachery, and applauded Valfontaine for so nobly giving his brother his life, which news was soon spread at Nantz, and then at St. Argnau, where Pennelle was as much grieved at Quatbrisson's disgrace, as his daughter triumphed at her Valfontaine's

victory, and because she would no longer be deprived of his presence, whose absence deprived her of all her earthly content and felicity, she made her prayers and tears become such incessant orators, and importunate advocates to her father, that she at last obtained his consent to take Valfontaine for her husband, which at St. Argnau was performed and consummated with much pomp.

But although Quatbrisson had all the reason in the world to be fully reconciled to his brother Valfontaine, yet where the heart is not sanctified, and in peace, the tongue may pretend, though not intend it; for the more he gazed on his sister-in-law La Pratiere's beauty, the more he lusted towards her; when knowing her to be as chaste as fair, and being confident that he was out of all hope to receive any immodest courtesy or familiarity from her whilst her husband, his brother Valfontaine lived, and being prompted by the devil, he resolved to deprive him of his life, of whom, as it were, but just before he had the happiness to receive his own.

As soon as we think of revenge, we forget ourselves; but when we consent to murder, we absolutely forget God; and that hellish contemplation does instantly work so wretchedly in us, that of men we become monsters. Quatbrisson having assumed the resolution to murder his brother Valfontaine, and seeing that it was neither in his power or fortune to kill him in the duel, therefore held it more safe to have him poisoned, and agreed with his apothecary named Moncalier, to undertake it; and in requital assured him of three hundred crowns, giving him one half in hand, and he promised speedily to

effect it, which he did in the following manner :

Valfontaine, six weeks after his marriage, finding his body in an extream heat, and his pulse in violent motion, and many symptoms of a fever appearing, to prevent which, he sent for his apothecary Moncalier, from Vannes to St. Argneau, who having opened a vein in the morning, at night gave him a clister, wherein he infused a poison so strong, that it soon spread over the vital parts of the body, extinguishing their radical moisture, and before the next morning killed him in his bed. His wife became exceeding sorrowful for this sudden and unexpected death of her husband Valfontaine, by which she was made a widow almost as soon as a wife. Her father was also sorrowful for the death of his son-in-law, and so were his own father and mother at Vannes. His inhuman brother Quatbriffon, although he could not blind the eyes of God, yet he intended to hoodwink those of men, and conceal from them the knowledge of his crimes, by putting on a mournful and disconsolate countenance, though he triumphed and rejoiced in his heart. He next rode over to St. Argneau, to his sister-in-law La Pratiere, to condole with her for the death of her husband, and with his best oratory strove to dissipate and dispel her sorrows; but still her thoughts and conscience did notwithstanding prompt her, considering his former courtship to her, and his fighting with his brother her husband for her, to think he had a hand in his death; but as a most virtuous and sorrowful lady, she left the revealing thereof to the pleasure and providence of God.

Three months were scarce past over since Valfontaine was laid in his grave, but Quatbriffon being still so deeply besotted with his own lust, and the beauty of La Pratiere, that he renewed his folly, and again became her suitor, having none but this poor pretence to colour out his incestuous desires, that he would procure a dispensation from Rome to approve it; and that he had already spoken to the Bishop of Reims to that effect. This indiscretion of his to La Pratiere, only encreased her jealousy to confirm her suspicion, and to make her more confident that her husband had been still living if he had not been the means of sending him so soon to the grave: wherefore she rejected him and his suit, telling him, that if he could find in his heart and conscience to marry her, she could not think of espousing him, and therefore desired him to give over his solicitations either to the bishop or the pope. This sharp and positive answer did not make Quatbriffon forsake her, but only alter his method of courting, for instead of his wife he attempted to make her his strumpet: but he had no sooner given her the first hint of his dishonourable intentions, than she quitted the place where he was with the utmost indignation, and informed her father of the vile affront he had offered her, who, to get rid of so uncivil a guest, forbade him his house.

This virtuous young widow having many admirers, after a year's mourning made choice of Pont-Chaufey for her second husband. Quatbriffon seeing himself disdainfully rejected by La Pratiere, like a base lover changed his affection into hatred towards her, vowing his revenge should shortly match her disdain, and shunned her company as much as he be-

fore

fore had desired it; giving himself entirely up to the abominable vices of fornication and adultery.

Quatbriffon hearing that a poor peasant, one Renne Malliot, of the parish of St. Andrew, three miles from Vannes, had a fair young daughter, lewdly resolving to see her and tempt her to his obscene desires, he rode over to her father's house, and alighting from his horse he called for some wine, with his hawk on his fist, and his lackies and dogs at his heels, the better to cover his lascivious design. Marietta was between sixteen and seventeen years of age, tall and straight, her hair of a bright flaxen colour, complexion delicate, her eyes capable of enflaming desire, and her mean cloaths, which would have disgraced another, served the better to set off her beauty.

Quatbriffon no sooner saw Marietta, but he found report came infinitely short of her real perfections, and burning with lust, his eyes and heart already did homage to her's: he was so much ensnared by her charms, that he vowed to leave no art unattempted to obtain his will of her, for which purpose he often privately visited her, and by making her presents thought the sooner to prevail upon her to part with her virgin treasure, and she, by her own innocence and simplicity, not thinking of the baseness of his design, became so enamoured of his gay cloaths, fine speeches, and rich presents, that she had not power to deny him any thing.

Whilst Quatbriffon laid close siege to the chastity of the daughter, her mother Jane Chaumet, being of a quick wit and sharp apprehension, considering his youth and her daughter's beauty, began to mistrust, that by his frequent visits he

had some ill design upon her, to prevent which she forbade him her house, assuring him, she would rather die than live to see her daughter made a strumpet; adding withal, that if he did not forbear her daughter's company, she would forthwith acquaint his father monsieur de Caerstaing with his behaviour; telling him, how close soever he carried himself, she knew him to be his son and heir, and that his name was Quatbriffon. This rebuke did much afflict and perplex him, and the more, in that he could not immediately think of any means to come at the speech of Marietta, but at length recollecting that he was formerly acquainted with an old Franciscan friar of Auroy, named father Simplician, thought him a fit agent for his purpose, and riding over to Auroy, sent for him to his lodging, where giving him good cheer, he discovered the whole secret, and laid himself open to him. The old friar, who loved his cups better than his beads, and monsieur Quatbriffon better than his guardian, who had twice expelled him the monastery for some debauched pranks, freely engaged himself to him; affirming, that he well knew the father, mother, and daughter, having heretofore many times lain in their house.

Hypocrisy is the devil's mask or vizard, and there is no way so subtle to deceive, as under the cloak and colour of religion. Friar Simplician, taking opportunity under pretences of visiting some kinsfolks, repaired to Vannes, then to Malliot's house, where feigning himself sick, to procure himself the better colour for his stay, and the better means for the dispatch of this love-sickness for monsieur Quatbriffon: Malliot and his wife, out of their

their respect to religion, entertained him lovingly, thinking no cost too much, or labour enough; but we shall see their hospitality repaid with base ingratitude.

In the absence of the father and mother, this debauched friar took care to teach their daughter Marietta a new catechism; he told her that monsieur Quatbriffon was deeply in love with her, that if she would hearken to his affection, and become flexible to his desires, he would steal her away from her parents, and either maintain her gentlewoman-like, or else marry her to some rich farmer's son. So this pander of a friar, what with the honey, or rather the poison of his fair speeches, and the temptation of some gifts which he delivered to her from Quatbriffon, drew the poor maid so far to beget herself, her parents, and her God, that she told father Simplician she was wholly at Quatbriffon's command, and that she was absolutely resolved to forsake her father and mother, and to go with him any night or day when he pleased to fetch her, which he soon did.

Quatbriffon having thus by himself and the friar stole away Marietta, and having by night brought her to his old nurse's house, which was a little distant from that of his father, he there secretly kept her, taking his pleasure of her; but Marietta's sorrowful father and mother seeing themselves thus robbed of their only jewel their daughter, they bitterly lamented her loss, and their own misfortune. She suspecting that monsieur Quatbriffon had stolen her away, went over to his father's house, and there with tears in her eyes acquainted both him and his lady thereof, who sent for their son Quatbriffon, and shewed him what scan-

dal his crime would be to him, and likewise how it would reflect upon themselves and family: but Quatbriffon, as a base debauched profligate, denied all, terming old Malliot's wife an old hag to charge him with stealing away her daughter, and without any redress this poor mother returned home again to her sorrowful husband. But for a small time we shall leave Quatbriffon and Marietta, and return to the execrable apothecary, who had poisoned Valfontaine.

Quatbriffon, as we have before shewn, having exchanged his former affection into malice towards his sister-in-law La Pratiere, did still retain such bloody thoughts against her, that he, in favour of three hundred crowns more, again engaged the hellish apothecary Moncallier, likewise to poison her; which intended tragedy of theirs was no sooner projected by one than promised to be speedily performed by the other. Thus both longing for La Pratiere's first sickness, two months were scarce over since her marriage with Pont-Chaufey, but she was attacked with a fever, when he, like a loving and kind husband, at the request of his wife, rode over to Vannes for Moncallier to come with him and give her relief, which presently, with much feigned sorrow, he undertaking, inwardly resolved to poison her.

Moncallier as requested visited his fair patient La Pratiere; but was so far from shame or repentance, for poisoning her first husband, that with a graceless spirit he confirmed himself in his former impious resolution likewise to dispatch her, but for that time contented himself only to draw six ounces of blood from her, promising to return the next morning with physick, and therein proposed to himself

to

to infuse the poison. But here let the Christian reader admire and wonder at the sudden punishment which God inflicted on Moncallier: for as he was ready to depart, and being on the top of the stairs, complimenting with her husband Pont-Chaufey at his farewell, he tript in his spurs, and falling down headlong, at the foot thereof broke his neck.

We now return to Quatbriffon, who amidst his carnal pleasures with Marietta, was advertised of Moncallier's unnatural death at St. Argnau, and was so far from being concerned at it, that he greatly rejoiced, because his neck being broke he could now tell no tales, only wished that he had dispatched La Pratiere first. Whilst Quatbriffon was taking delight in the enjoyment of Marietta, her parents were overwhelmed with grief, for it was now noised all about Vannes, that Quatbriffon had stolen away Malliot's daughter, and this coming to her father and mother's ears, he, being weak and sickly himself, sent his wife over again to monsieur de Caerstaing and his lady; and throwing herself at their feet, with tears in her eyes, acquainted them with the publick report, humbly beseeching them to oblige their son to restore their child to them; but they could only promise to examine their son again, and to cause all their tenants houses in the neighbourhood to be searched for her, which was all the comfort the poor woman could carry home again to her husband; but Quatbriffon hearing of what had passed, caused Pierot, his father's miller, with much secrecy and haste, to fetch Marietta away at midnight, from his nurse's house to his mill; which was about a quarter of a mile from his father's.

The next morning Quatbriffon going privately to the mill to visit her, he informed her how her parents had incensed his father and mother against himself and her, but bade her be of good comfort, for she should want for nothing; that he would shortly provide a better lodging, and take care both for her safety and reputation, she being now apparently with child by him. When seeing herself as it were penned up in prison, that she had no new apparel, nor was likely to have any husband; looking back upon her folly, and seeing that she had made herself the grief of her father and mother, and almost the disdain of Quatbriffon, who, surfeited in his pleasures with her, began now to look more strange to her than usual; she, with many sighs and tears repented herself of her error, but how to remedy it she knew not.

As for Quatbriffon, he supposing he had his father's miller Pierot at his command, proffered him two hundred French crowns to marry her. Whereat the miller could not at first refrain from blushing and laughing; but seeing Marietta to be young and fair, he was so far in love with her, that at first he wished her to be his wife; but again considering, that she was with child by her young master, and that if he should marry her, he would undoubtedly be more master of her than himself; he prayed him therefore to excuse him, but for any other service in his power he was, and ever should be at his command.

Poor Marietta seeing her hopes grow less as her burthen grew bigger, and finding herself Quatbriffon's prisoner, with many deep sighs and tears she besought

him, that he would either speedily provide her a husband, or permit her with shame to return home to her sorrowful parents. These requests, so reasonable, quoth she, "If it is not in your power to grant the first, yet I hope it will be your pleasure not to deny me the last." But Quatbriffon, notwithstanding all her tears, was so vexed, as well with her importunity as the sharp reflections of his own parents, and the bitter lamentations of her's, that in the heat of his passion he left her, and absenting himself longer than usual, by degrees began to loath her as much as he had before loved her.

Marietta perceiving his ungrateful unkindness towards her, it pierced her heart with grief, and her soul with despair. She requested the miller to tell Quatbriffon, that she prayed him to see her, but he perceiving that his young master slighted her, and that his affection was grown cold, refused to go himself, but sent his boy; this message of hers only enflamed his anger, and he bade the boy tell her he was gone to Rennes, and should not return for a month, and ordered his master to come privately to him in the morning at his father's orchard. If then Quatbriffon's unkindness to Marietta before, made her seem the very picture of sorrow, his abrupt departure, and disdainful either to see her or bid her once farewell, made her almost distracted; she tore her hair, and with a sorrowful and mournful inclination, endeavoured to drown herself in the ocean of her tears; yea, her griefs were so insupportable for disobeying her parents and offending God, that the remembrance of her sins made her not dare to look towards heaven for assistance! a thousand times she wished she

had never been born, and as high as heaven exclaimed on Quitbrasson's ingratitude, and cursed the name and memory of Friar Simplician, for betraying and seducing her to sin, which had brought her to misery and disconsolation: her calamity was so great, that she could not write for comfort from any one, or if she could, she knew not from whom to expect, much less receive it.

Whilst Marietta was thus echoing her complaints to the bare walls of her chamber, Pierot, the miller, met his young master Quatbriffon in the orchard, according to his appointment, where between them they plotted such a tragedy as must excite pity from the most flinty bosom; for Quatbriffon being surfeited with the sensual delights and wanton pleasures of Marietta, and knowing that she would be a continual eye-fore to his parents, and a scandal to himself as long as she lived in this world, he cruelly resolved sending her into another; no consideration whatever of her youth and beauty, or being with child by him, could prevail on him to the contrary, and breaking his mind to Pierot, he promised him many advantages to undertake it, which this bloody miscreant, out of his hellish avarice, promised to perform, for which purpose they consulted the manner of dispatching her; the miller proposed, under some pretence or other, the taking her into the next wood by night, and there murder her, but Quatbriffon differed in opinion, saying, that the place was so near his father's house, when the body was found it would bring him into suspicion, therefore thought it most adviseable for the miller to strangle her in bed at night, and bury her in his outward yard, planting something over her,

her, that no one might suspect the true reason why the ground was disturbed. To this they both agreed, and the miller engaged to do it within three days.

The bloody scene being agreed upon, Pierot went home to his mill, where poor Marietta, little suspecting what danger she was in, very fondly enquired of the miller if he had heard any thing of Quatbriffon, and whether he was gone to Rennes, as the boy had told her; he assured her he had, but had given him particular charge before he went, to use her with great kindness, which he faithfully promised; Marietta thanked him, but thought he appeared more sullen than usual. Here let us admire the wonderful workings of providence in dreams, not that they can with any certainty be depended upon, being often the effects of foregoing ideas, or a disordered mind, but this very night Marietta dreamed that the miller had murdered her, and thrown her into the water; which dream she remembering the next morning, related it to Pierot, but he seemed enraged thereat, protesting with many oaths, that she was as safe in his mill, as if in the castle or tower of Bylin or Blavet, which were the strongest places in Bretagne. Notwithstanding all these assurances, this impious and bloody villain, the night ensuing, when she was in a sound sleep, softly entered her chamber, bringing with him a small cord, which he conveying under her head and about her neck, strangled her, without giving her time or power to cry out. As soon as this agent of hell had deprived her, and consequently the fruit of her womb, of life, within less than an hour he changed his design of burying her in the yard, and, in the dress she was in,

carried her to his mill boat in the pond, where, tying a piece of mill-stone about her middle, threw her into the deepest part of the pond.

The next morning after Pierot had committed this horrid murder, not being able to rest for the joy of having executed his master's desire, hastened away with the news to Quatbriffon, who received it with much satisfaction, and assured him he would confirm whatever he had promised. The better to avoid suspicion if the body should be found, Quatbriffon rode over to Rennes, and there rejoiced to think he had so got rid of Marietta. The miller at home too was rejoiced at the thoughts of the advantages he should receive, never once looking into his conscience with any remorse or repentance for the vile act he had been guilty of; but the Lord did not suffer his joy to be lasting, for by his providence, very speedily and almost miraculously discovered their iniquity.

A month was not elapsed before this discovery was made by the means of monsieur de Pont-Chaufey, La Pratiere's second husband, who being one day at Vannes with three other gentlemen, they were inclined to hunt a duck with two of their spaniels, and no pond being so convenient as that at Pierot's mill, they went thither; but the duck was no sooner in the water, and the dogs, but the latter coming near the place where the body of Marietta was sunk, instantly forsook the duck, there paddling with their feet, and snuffing with their noses in the water, set up a terrible howling, barking at each other without stirring from the place; which the company observing, God instantly inspired them with an apprehension that

some

some one had been accidentally or on purpose drowned there, whereupon they resolved immediately to draw up the sluice, and let all the water out of the pond; but thinking again, they determined to make another experiment, so for that time they took up their duck and departed, calling away their spaniels, but after dinner they returned, and the duck being again put in, the spaniels in the very same place did the same that they had done in the morning, howling and barking in a most horrid manner.

This second trial of the spaniels confirmed Pont-Chaufey and his companions in their first suspicion, therefore resolved to let the water out of the pond, and were going about it, when the miller seeing himself on the brink of danger, and thinking it high time to use his best endeavours to prevent their design, in a most humble manner told them, that he was a poor young man, in the first year of his setting up for himself, and that it being in the midst of a hot and dry summer, his pond could not receive water again for his mill in a month or two, which would infallibly beggar him; therefore he besought them, with tears in his eyes, to desist from their purpose, and speaking so pitifully, his intreaties prevailed upon the other three gentlemen, but on Pont-Chaufey could not, but rather the more strongly confirmed his former apprehension and belief, and that the miller was not ignorant of it; therefore he was resolved to search the pond, and the better to effect his design, he seemed at present to comply with the miller's request, so sending away his servants and dogs, enquired of the miller if he had any cards or dice in his mill;

Pierot answered that he had cards but no dice: upon which the four gentlemen went with the miller into his mill, and there sitting down played for some trifling stakes. The miller was ravished to think that his fair speeches had kept the water in his pond, and himself out of danger, and was wonderful diligent and officious to attend upon his guests.

The gentlemen having played about an hour, Pont-Chaufey told the miller that he was very thirsty, and asked if there was any wine to be had near the mill; but the miller answered that there was none nearer than the town, whether he offered to run, with all speed, to fetch some; which indeed was the very point that Pont-Chaufey aimed at: so giving him some money, this inconsiderate miller seemed rather to fly than run to the town for it, rejoicing that the storm, which so lately and nearly threatened him, was blown over; but he was no sooner out of sight, but Pont-Chaufey presently throwing up the cards, prayed the rest of the gentlemen to assist him in drawing up the sluice, and emptying the pond, which they readily consenting to, the water was not above half way out of it, before they beheld a dead body floating and fastened to a rope. When viewing it more nearly, they found that it was the body of a woman, but her flesh was so shrivelled with the water, that it was impossible to know who she was.

Pont-Chaufey and his friends seeing this lamentable spectacle, and comparing therewith the miller's earnest solicitations to them not to empty his pond, with great reason suspected that he was concerned in this murder, and resolved to seize him on his return with the wine, with which
he

he presently came from the town singing all the way, and not once dreaming of what had happened at his pond, which, when he ascended the top of the hill by the wood's side, spied emptied; then his conscience flying in his face, and his danger terrifying him, he set down his wine on the ground, and committing his safety to the celerity of his heels, ran with all speed towards the center of the wood, which Pont-Chaufey, and the rest of the gentlemen seeing, needed no other evidence to convince them of his being guilty of the murder: so they immediately sent after him, and within an hour he was found, and brought to his mill, where the gentlemen accused him of, and he as resolutely denied, the fact: notwithstanding which they shut him up close prisoner in his own mill, till they had found who the woman was that was murdered.

The report of this mournful accident being soon carried to Vannes, and noised about, a multitude of people flocked from all parts to view the dead body, and among the rest Ivon Malliot and his wife, who no sooner hearing of it, but they suspected that it was the body of their daughter Marietta. When they arrived at the pond, they saw all the people stand aloof from the body because of the stench; but they, hardened by their fear, and encouraged by their affection, rushed towards it, but could not easily at first discern who she was; upon which they washed away the mud from her petticoat, hoping to draw some information and light from thence, which, alas! they did too soon for their content, for they found it to be the very same she had on when she fled, or was stolen from them, whereat crossing their arms, and sending their

fighs to heaven, this poor afflicted father and mother cried out, that it was the dead body of their dear child Marietta, and either Quatbriffon, or Pierot the miller, or both of them, had murdered her.

Pont-Chaufey rode immediately to Vannes, leaving the other three gentlemen to guard the miller, and advertised the sénéchal and other judges of the affair, upon which they sent for the miller to Vannes, and the next day, being brought before them, was examined and accused of the murder; but he, with many bitter oaths and curses denied all, swearing that he never knew, or so much as saw her; but his answer would not pass current with his judges, who immediately ordered him to the rack.

The wretched miller was greatly terrified at the sight of it, and his courage began to fail him, as fearing it would be the prologue to a worse tragedy; however he endured the single torment pretty well, but feeling the tortures of the second, he confessed that he was the sole author and actor of the murder in question, and that he first strangled the young woman in his mill, and then threw her into the pond, because she would never consent to be his wife, or gratify his inclinations any other way. All this while he spoke not a single word of Quatbriffon, feeding his foolish hopes with the belief, that when he was condemned at Vannes, if he then appealed to the parliament of Rennes, where he knew his young master Quatbriffon was, he should be in no danger of dying: but, contrary to these weak and idle imaginations, the next morning, when he expected to hear sentence of death pronounced upon him, his judges ordered him to the torment of the scarpines, to make him confess.

felt whether monsieur Quatbriffon, or any other was accessary with him in this murder. His left foot being burnt so severely that he could not endure any farther torture, he owned that his young master Quatbriffon hired him to strangle Marietta in her bed, having promised him a new lease and other rewards for that piece of service: he likewise owned that he threw her into the pond, and that he believed at the time he murdered her she was with child by his said master Quatbriffon.

Pierot was condemned to be broke alive upon the wheel, but it being necessary to confront him and Quatbriffon, his execution was respited till the other was apprehended at Rennes, whither the seneschal and king's attorney sent his accusation to that famous court of parliament, where he was taken out of his coach by the pursuivants and serjeants, and committed close prisoner by order of the lieutenant-criminal. But he, vainly trusting to the fidelity and secrecy of Pierot, seemed no way dismayed, till he heard his accusation and indictment read, "That Marietta's murdered body was found in the pond; that Pierot the miller was apprehended and imprisoned for the same; and that he had confessed him to be the author, and himself the actor of the cruel murder;" then he was so daunted, and far from any hope of life, that he utterly despaired thereof, and palpably saw the image of death before his eyes. When, with a few tears and many sighs, confessing to his judges himself the author of this fact, he begged pardon of God.

Although four of the council, and one of the presidents were resolved to have him hanged, yet the rest, knowing him to be the son and heir of a very ancient

gentleman nobly descended, over-ruled the others, and adjudged him the next day to have his head cut off, although his sorrowful aged father monsieur de Caerstaing offered the one half of his lands to save his life; and likewise was a most importunate suppliant to the duke of Tremouilles, who there presided at the estates for the nobility, to intercede with that parliament for his reprieve, and with the king for his pardon, but in vain. The next morning Quatbriffon was brought to the scaffold, at the common place of execution, where a great concourse of people flocked to see him take his last farewell of this world; when, after the priests had prepared his soul, he, ascending the scaffold, delivered this short speech:

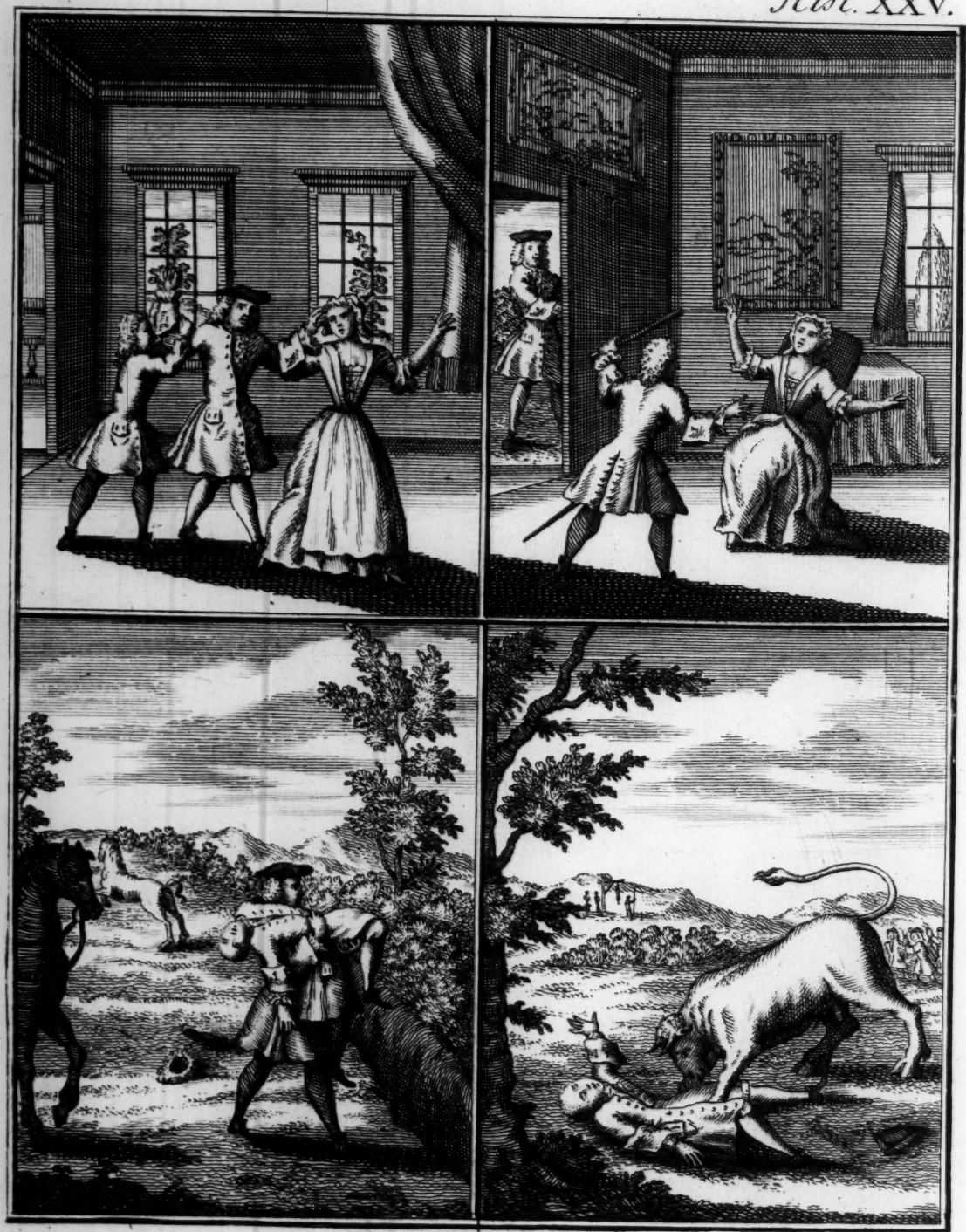
That in regard he knew, that, when he was to take his leave of this life, to charge his conscience with the concealing of any capital crime was the direct way to send his soul to hell, he would therefore reveal that he was yet more execrable than his judges or spectators imagined; for he not only hired Pierot to murder Marietta, but also Moncallier, the apothecary, to poison his brother Valfontaine; of both which crimes he now confessed him guilty, and from his heart sorrowfully repented of them; that his lust and inordinate affection to women was the first cause, and his neglect of prayer to God the second, which had justly brought him to this shameful end; therefore he besought all who were present, to be seriously forewarned by his example, and that they would join in their devout prayers with his to God for his soul. When praying a little while to himself kneeling, he committed himself to the executioner, who at one blow severed his head from his shoulders.

G O D ' s

06A



Hist. XXV.



GOD'S REVENGE

AGAINST

MURDER and ADULTERY.

HISTORY XXV.

ARGUMENT.

Vasti first murders his Son George, and next poisons his Wife Hester; and being afterwards almost killed by a mad Bull in the Fields, reveals these two Murders, for which he is first hanged and then burnt.

IN the city of Fribourg, in the county of Switzerland, there dwelt a rich burgher, named Peter Vasti, who had a discreet and virtuous wife, named Hester, by whom he had only one child, a son, called George Vasti, born the latter end of the first year after their marriage, and for the term of ten years following, this married couple lived with so great kindness and love towards each other, that they were reputed very happy by all their neighbours; for she was careful of her family, and he industrious to maintain it, both of them being chaste and content in themselves, very religious and charitable, and so temperate in their

drinking, that they could not be tainted with the vice of drunkenness, whereunto the people of that country are too much addicted. So that had Vasti still followed these virtues in the course of his life, he had not then defiled this history with the profusion of so much innocent blood; but, as contrary causes produce contrary effects, so he by this time polluting himself with pernicious company, it was no marvel if he left his temperance to follow drunkenness: for good men cannot receive a greater plague, nor the devil give them a worse pestilence than bad company: it is the fatal snell and dismal rock whereon people have, and do daily
 fuller

suffer shipwreck : it is the grief of a kingdom and country, the bane of our age, and the corruption and poison of our times. This was now the case of Vasti, for after twelve years of a most peaceable cohabitation, and godly conversation between him and his virtuous wife Hester, she was now enforced to see a brutish metamorphosis in her husband ; for he was no more the man nor the husband which she formerly found him to be.

He neither loved his home nor his wife, but staying abroad every day with whores, at night returning home to her drunk, he reviled and beat her, whereas, heretofore he would rather have lost his life than have struck her ; and, in the extravagance of these his debauched humours, he hated her so that he supposed he could not be sufficiently cruel to her, although her affection was still so fervent to him, that she gave him nothing but fair words or tears, proving in all respects as good a wife, as he was become a bad husband. She left no mean unessay'd to tempt and divert him from the ways he was in, to bring him back to the paths of her virtues ; but all her endeavours were vain, and she was soon informed that he kept a young strumpet, at the town of Cleraux, six leagues from Fribourg, named Salyna, to whom he went every morning, and to make himself the more treacherous dissembler to his wife, he coloured this his journey with the false pretence of going to Cleraux to hear the sermons of Mr. Abraham Tiffin, a very famous preacher there ; when God knew the contrary, and that this his pretended excuse was only a false cloak to cover his adultery and prophane impiety, for Salyna was the saint of his voluptuous

devotion, her house the temple of his obscure wishes, and adultery the oblation and sacrifice of his lascivious desires.

Vasti, not thinking of religion, sported with Salyna in Cleraux, whilst his virtuous wife Hester wept at Fribourg ; and when he returned thence, he was so cruel to her, that he continually beat her. By this time George, their son, was sixteen years of age, of a man's stature, and of a very pregnant wit, and young as he was, had been long a sorrowful eye-witness of his father's cruelty in beating his mother : he had formerly seen the lamentable effects of it, and now falling on his knees to her, and with tears he besought her to acquaint him with the true cause thereof, and from whence it proceeded : when his mother, adding more confidence to his wisdom than to his youth, fully related to him the true cause. George, moved at the knowledge thereof was hardly able to bridle his resentment. He was grieved to be the son of so vicious a father, as much as he prided himself in the virtues of his mother ; so making her sorrows his, vowed either to alter his father's temper, or revenge it on Salyna, whom he knew to be the original cause of all these afflictions that befell his mother, and the very next time he saw his father beat his mother, stepping to her assistance he defended her from the tyranny of his blows, which his father taking extremely ill, gave him sharp words and bitter blows.

His son first returned him a brief rehearsal of the wrongs he still offered to his mother, and protesting his obedience to him, he yet told him, that he was willing to entertain his words, but no longer capable to digest his blows ; adding, that

that ere long he would visit his strumpet Salyna, in Cleraux, and make her feel a part of her base carriage both towards his mother and himself. Vasti was much astonished at this boldness of his son, but far more to hear him name and threaten Salyna, the very thought of which grated him to his heart, and holding it for that time a virtue to be calm, he departed to his chamber, leaving his wife and his son consulting in the parlour how they might provide for their affairs. The next morning Vasti kept his bed, having given orders that neither his wife or son have admittance to him, which discourtesy gave his son a fresh motive to revive his last night's discontent against his father, and his revenge against Salyna; when bidding his mother adieu, and craving her blessing, he purposely framed an excuse to leave her till she was dressed, and privately taking horse, that morning acted a business every way worthy of himself. It was not so much his malice to Salyna, as his affection to his mother Hester, which carried him to Cleraux; where entering Salyna's house, he with fire in his looks, and thunder in his speeches, called her whole, and charged her with abusing his father, and in him, his mother and himself. His choler would not allow him patience to hear her false apologies, but disdaining to use his sword on a woman, he took his man's short cudgel, and gave her several blows, swearing to her, that if she forsook not his father's company, he would shortly give her so bitter a requital, as would hardly leave her either the will or power to thank him for his courtesy; and so remounting his horse, he presently galloped home to his mother, whom he acquainted with his transaction,

but concealed it from his father; whereat she seemed not a little joyful, but prayed to God that this might breed no bad blood in her husband against herself, nor a desire of revenge against their son.

But this joy of Hester, and her son George, proved the sighs and tears of Salyna, who not accustomed to receive such sharp treatment from any man's hands, it made her extreme cholerick and vindictive, so that her stomach was so great, that she would not suffer this cruel affront offered her by him to go unrequited; but yet she would be as secret in her revenge towards him, as he was publick in his towards her. To which purpose, seeing that Vasti his father came not to her that day, whereby judging he was wholly ignorant of what had befallen her from his son, she that night wrote him a letter, and the next morning sent it to Fribourg to him, by a confident messenger of her's, who arriving there, and finding him in his garden, respectfully delivered it to him, who breaking up the seal thereof, read as follows:

SALYNA to VASTI.

“ **B**Y all the inviolable love and tender affection which is between us, I pray and conjure you to leave Fribourg, and come over to me with expedition to Cleraux; because I have an important secret to reveal to you, which equally concerns us, and which I dare not commit to pen and paper, for that the knowledge thereof, needs no other witnesses but ourselves. If you any way neglect this my advice, or deny this my request, the grief will be mine own, but the prejudice yours hereafter. I write you these few lines with

"with infinite affliction and sorrow, which
 "nothing can deface but your fight; nor
 "remedy but your presence; and when
 "you come to me, prepare your heart
 "to receive a melancholy relation from
 "your

"SALYNA."

This letter so nettled Vasti with apprehension that his son George had offered her some violence, that he hasted to Cleraux, where his mistress Salyna very passionately informed him of his son's cruelty to her, and, to add the more efficacy to her complaints, and more fire to his anger, she forgot not to paint out to him the number of his son's blows, and of his threats given her; she swore that if he speedily did not revenge these her wrongs upon his son, she never would see him more. Vasti's affection was such towards Salyna, that in the midst of his choler he vowed to kill his son for the injury he had done her.

Salyna stood amazed at his unnatural resolution, which, vicious as she was, she abhorred and condemned as soon as she heard; she told him plainly, that although she had given him her heart and person, yet she was not so exempt of grace, as to take away her soul from God; and therefore, that although she was guilty of adultery, yet she would never be of murder; in religious terms, she powerfully sought to dissuade him from his bloody and unnatural purpose, and prayed him to seek out some other requital towards his son; which he promised her, and sealed it with oaths and kisses, then immediately taking horse, rode homewards: his son George finding his father out, and being assured that he was gone to Cleraux to Salyna, who would acquaint him with his beating

her, and fearing his choler, held it more discreet to take his sword with him for his defence; when chusing a good horse out of the stable, he deemed it less dangerous to meet his father half-way between Cleraux and Fribourg, and there in the open field to attend what he had to say. Vasti seeing his son George afar off, riding towards him with his sword by his side, much marvelled thereat, and knowing his courage, and that young as he was, he had lately acquitted himself in a duel to his honour, he therefore resolved to make it a tongue and not a sword quarrel with him.

Upon their meeting the son laid before him the enormity and scandal of his abusing his mother, who was a virtuous wife, and every way a deserving woman, and old Vasti, after gently reproving his son for presuming to catechize his father, seemed at length convinced by the force of his arguments, and promised to treat his wife in a better manner for the future, desiring his son to make peace between them, which George promised to perform to the best of his power. So home they came, and whilst Vasti was walking in his garden, George found out his mother in her own chamber, being newly risen from her prayers. Here George informed his mother in full what conference had past in the open fields between him and his father; and, in a word, acted his part and duty so well, that he left no persuasions unattempted, to draw her to a reconciliation with his father. When at first considering the nature and quality of her husband's usage to her, she found some opposition hereto in her mind, and some reluctance in her will. But at last giving his former discontent to charity, and her passions

passions to peace, she, after a brief consultation between them, with a chearful countenance thanked her son for his care and affection to her herein, and informed him, " That she having never justly offended her husband in thought, word, or deed, was as willing of peace and reconciliation with him, as he could possibly desire or wish;" and to testify it to her son, as well in action as words, she would then have gone down with him to her husband, there privately to have concluded this Christian business between them, had not her son diverted her from it; for being exceeding careful to preserve his mother's reputation, he prayed her to stay, alledging, that he would presently fetch and conduct his father to her chamber to her, as holding it more requisite and just, that the delinquent should first see and seek the party wronged before the party sought the delinquent, whereat she could not refrain from smiling, and then bade him go. So George descended to the garden, and acquainted his father with his mother's chearful resolution to a perpetual peace with him; whereat seeming infinitely glad and joyful, he ascended her chamber, and having saluted her, told her, that he was very sorrowful for his former unkindness to her, for which he prayed her pardon, and promised a reformation: upon which she freely forgave him.

Now to all appearance their reconciliation was perfect and sincere on both sides; but alas! we shall see the contrary, for while Hester was fast asleep, Vasti, like a devil incarnate, was waking with malice and revenge, and laughed to see how he had lulled asleep the resentment of his son and wife. For his affection still

remaining with the strumpet Salyna, he was resolved to be revenged of his son for his ill treatment of her and boldness to himself; in the mean time he sent her the following letter to excuse his absence:

VASTI to SALYNA.

" I AM plotting a business which infinitely imports both our contents: if you will resolve to brook my absence with as much patience as I do your's with sorrow, I shall finish it the sooner, and especially as I am impatient to see you. I have met with an accident which at first brought me much fear and trouble, but I have drawn that security out of policy that I could not have hoped from resistance; for I must inform you of this truth, that if my zeal and affection to you, had not been of greater power and consideration than that of my own life, I should then with more willingness have hazarded it for your sake, than have preserved it for my own. But the mists of those doubts are now dissipated, and the clouds of these fears blown away; or if not, I will shortly take that order, that you shall have no cause to fear the one, or I to doubt the other. When I shall be so happy to see you, I know not; but if fortune prove propitious to my desires and wishes, my return shall be with as much celerity, as it is eagerly longed for by

" VASTI."

Salyna received this letter of Vasti's with equal fear and joy; for as she was glad to hear from him, so she was sorrowful, as fearing he should embark himself in some bloody business, which might prove ruinous to them both. And although her apprehension

apprehension did far exceed her knowledge herein, yet her suspicion would give her no truce, neither could her jealousy administer any peace to her mind, before she was resolved by Vasti of the truth thereof. For though she could content herself with making him guilty of fornication, yet religion had still left such impressions of piety in her, that she would still have had him innocent of revenge and murder; therefore by his own messenger she return'd him this answer:

SALYNA to VASTI.

“ **B**Ecause you deem me unworthy to know your designs, therefore I cannot but fear them; in which regard and consideration, think it not strange that I now intreat you to engrave in your heart, that malice is most commonly squint-eyed and revenge blind; therefore if you will not ruin your affections and fortunes, take heed that you embroil not your hands in innocent blood; for murder is a crying sin, which God may forgive by his mercy, but will not by his justice; wherefore this my letter of advice to you, shall be a witness between God, yourself, and me. Therefore, as you love me, hazard not your life for my sake, but preserve it for your own. As it is in your will to make your stay from me as long or as short as you please; so it shall be in my pleasure to judge thereof; and thereby of your affection to me. I wish I could be more your's, than I am, and yourself as often in my company as I desire; God prosper you in your stay, and me in your absence.

“ SALYNA.”

Vasti having settled his affection with Salyna, he saw with grief, that it was now almost impossible for him to see her in Cleraux, because of the watchful eye of his son George over him and his actions in Fribourg; wherefore, notwithstanding her religious advice to him to beware of blood, yet his lustful affection to her did conquer his natural love to him, and to satisfy his inordinate desires, he vowed he would shortly send him to heaven; and the sooner and better to compass this his unnatural resolution against his son, he acted for a short time fair with him, and gilded over his speeches to his wife with much respect, and for six weeks did not visit Salyna.

But this false sun-shine was soon overtaken with a dismal tempest; for whatever religious shew Vasti externally made unto them, yet he again positively vowed to himself that his son George should not live. Being thus resolute in his bloody purpose, he thought it adviseable to add policy to malice, so filling his head with notions of military honours, and knowing him inclined to travel, he highly commended his judgment, and represented to him how ornamental it was for young men to learn virtues abroad that they might practise at home; and how much renown and glory their ancestors had gained in the wars.

Such lectures as these did Vasti read to his son George, till at last the name of a soldier so filled his ambitious thoughts, that he besought his father to send him abroad in some martial capacity; but the father being as crafty as the son was hasty and inconsiderate, suffered himself to be long importuned to this purpose, but at last promised to send him to Rome, to his uncle

uncle Andreo Vasti, who was a captain of one of the companies of pope Urban's guard, and was old and rich, without a wife or child.

George thanked his father for this courtesy, and importuned him to hasten his departure, which he promised; but the greatest difficulty was how to obtain the mother's consent to this journey, who at first opposed it very strongly, as he was her only child, and the greatest delight and joy of her life. But the father left his son to draw his consent from her, as knowing that the less himself, and the more his son importuned her, the sooner she would grant it, which fell out as he expected; only the son requested to stay four years abroad, his father gave him but three, and his mother would grant him but two; with which at last both father and son were forced to comply: and his father provided him with new apparel, a horse and money.

The morning of George's departure came, when his mother the night before having dreamt that her son would die in this journey, was exceeding sorrowful to let him go from her; but being again fortified by the advice of her husband, and likewise vanquished by the importunate request of her son, she bedewed his cheeks with her tears, giving him much good counsel, some gold, and her blessing, and so took leave of each other. Vasti, being secretly as resolute in his malice and revenge to his son, as his son was innocent in not deserving it of his father, he was so far from going with him to Turin, as he had promised, he would not bring him so far as Geneva, but a mile before he came to Lufanne, where he told his son he would lay that night, in a long

narrow lane, where no earthly eye could behold him, being wholly deprived of the grace and fear of God, as his son was riding close before him, he shot him through the back with his pistol, charged with a brace of bullets; when immediately falling dead to the ground, he there descended his horse, and, without any remorse as a father, cut off his nose, and most lamentably mangled his face that he might not be known; then taking him on his shoulder, threw him into a deep ditch, as also the saddle and bridle of his horse, and having turned his horse into the wide fields, he, to provide for his safety, rode swiftly to Morges, and there very secretly hushed himself up, pretending to be sick; and eight days being expired, which was the prefixed time he gave his wife for his return, he by a contrary road came home, bringing her word of the health of her son, and of the remembrance of his duty to her, and that he left him well in Turin, expecting the benefit of company to travel up to Rome; whereat she was well satisfied.

Old Vasti, for about ten days after his return from acting this deplorable tragedy, kept up a good decorum with his wife Hester; but at the end thereof, forgetting his oaths and promises, he again relapsed into his former vices, but did indeed forbear beating her as before; however his lust being so great, and his desires so strong towards his harlot Salyna, that having staid from her not quite two months, they seemed to him so many ages, therefore, pretending another journey to his wife, he rode over to Cleraux to pay his devoirs to her, who received him with much joy, and the more when he acquainted her, that he had sent his son

George to Rome, to reside there for some years; but yet considering the letter he sent to her, she could not help doubting of his having acted some cruel part with him, and vowed if it was so, she would never look upon him more, but he protesting his innocence therein, they went to their usual endearments, Vasti continuing all night with her, and the greatest part of the next day, lavishing his money upon her with much prodigality; then after having sated himself with his sensual pleasures, he returned home to his wife, who knowing with whom he had been, and considering that it was the first time of his relapsing into his old error since their reconciliation, said nothing to him to make him uneasy, but thought and dreaded the more; so retiring into her garden by herself, she there grieved to think she had permitted her son George to leave her, and a thousand times wished for his return, to comfort her, which indeed she soon had need of, for Vasti fell again to his old practice of beating her, which she bore for some time with all imaginable patience, only sending her prayers to heaven for his conversion, and oftentimes with tears bewailing her own misfortunes.

Vasti was now oftener at Cleraux with Salyna, than at Fribourg with his wife, which his virtuous wife could not but observe with sorrow, as much as she was grieved at his treatment of her at home: wherefore her thoughts suggested to her another experiment to try to keep him within the bounds of decency and humanity towards her. She told him, that if he would not henceforth give over beating her, she would speedily, by the assistance of some kinsfolks, send post to Rome, to his brother captain Andreo Vasti, for

her son George to return home to Fribourg, which she was confident he would readily perform upon the receipt of her letter.

Vasti extremely galled with this speech of his wife Hester, because, wretched villain as he was, he but too well knew, he had murdered his son, and therefore was afraid that by his wife's sending to Rome his damnable fact would be discovered; to prevent which, he was resolved to add blood to blood, to poison the mother as he had before pistoled the son.

Vasti was so strong in this his bloody purpose of destroying his wife, that neither the fear of his body's tortures in this life, or of his soul's torments in that to come, were able to divert him from it, so providing himself with poison, this execrable wretch infused it into a melon, which he knew she was fond of, and usually eat after dinner, which taking, she died before night, and he gave out that her death was occasioned by a surfeit.

Vasti having thus poisoned his virtuous wife, now acted the hypocrite to conceal it, putting on a face of sorrow, and cloathing himself, and servants in black, and performing all things for her funeral with great solemnity. But notwithstanding all these endeavours to screen his crimes from the eyes of men, God, from whom nothing can be hid, laid them open to the world, and severely punished him for the same. For his mansion-house, and all his furniture at Fribourg, were consumed by a sudden fire, proceeding from a flash of lightning from heaven; as were also his granaries of corn, and stacks of hay; all his horses were stolen from him, and most of his cattle died of a new and strange disease, running mad and destroying

destroying one another. Although Vasti was amazed at all these wonderful losses, yet had he not grace enough to look towards heaven, and repent of his crimes; but while the hand of God was upon him, and even in his great poverty, which was brought upon him by Salyna, he still retained a fondness for her, and was weak enough to believe she had the same for him, and therefore hoped he might retrieve his losses by marrying her: but she finding to what condition he was reduced, not only denied his suit, but disdained him, and would not permit him even to enter her house, which galled him more than his poverty, although he was brought so low as to be forced to sell or pawn every trifle he had, and like a wretched vagabond whom God had abandoned, straggled up and down the streets of Fribourg, without meat, money, or friends; but these calamities were but the harbingers of greater miseries which were to befall him.

Vasti, returning one day to Fribourg from Cleraux, where he had been to beg some support of Salyna, which she was so base as to deny him, the providence of God so ordered it, that in the same meadow where he and his son had their former conference, being faint, he laid himself down to sleep at the foot of a wild chefnut-tree, and there slept so soundly, that he could not hear the great noise which many people made afar off in the meadow, for taking a furious mad bull, which ran directly to Vasti as he lay snoring, and twice tost him in the air, bruising him in such a manner, that all who came to his assistance thought he was dead; but at last coming a little to himself the people about him took off his cloaths, and found

that the bull, with his horns, had made two little holes in his belly, they carried him to the next cottage, when all, and himself, believed that he had not an hour to live. However it so pleased God that he revived enough to see the danger he was in, and to open the eyes of his faith, and by making a fair confession of his crimes, to endeavour to obtain pardon for them, from the infinite mercy of the Almighty. To this end he now became a witness against himself, confessing that it was he who murdered his son George with a pistol near Lufanne, and who also poisoned his own wife Hester in Fribourg, for which murders he said he begged pardon of God.

Upon this some of the company rode to Fribourg, and acquainted the officers of justice thereof, who speedily sent two surgeons to dress his wounds, and four sergeants to bring him to that town alive if possible. The surgeons having searched his wounds, found, that though they were mortal, yet they believed he might live some days. Being brought to Fribourg he there likewise confessed to the magistrates the aforesaid cruel murder, for which they condemned him to be hanged, and to have his dead body burnt to ashes, which sentence was accordingly executed at Fribourg the next day, in presence of a vast concourse of people brought thither on the occasion, but they thinking and expecting that he would have made some religious speech at his death, were therein disappointed, for he only prayed privately to himself, repeating the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, and recommending his soul to God, without once mentioning the names of his son George, his wife Hester, or his strumpet Salyna.

GOD'S.

GOD's REVENGE

A G A I N S T

MURDER and ADULTERY.

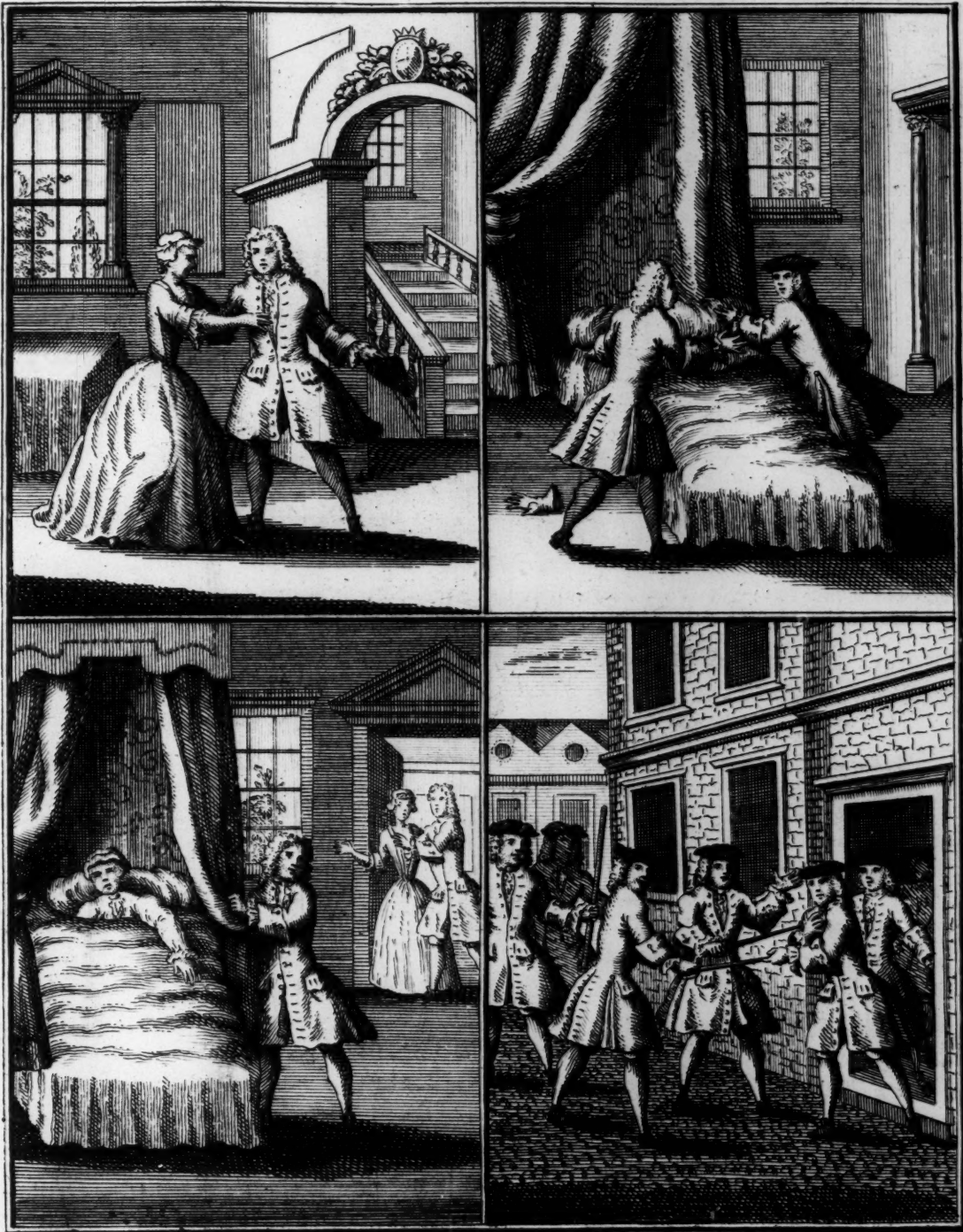
H I S T O R Y XXVI.

A R G U M E N T.

Imperia being in love with young Morofini, seduceth him and his two Companions, Astonicus and Donato to stifle her old Husband Palmerius in his Bed. Morofini dropping one of his Gloves in Palmerius's Chamber the same Night that he murdered him, it is found by Palmerius's Nephew Richardo, who knowing it to be Morofini's, doth thereupon accuse him, and his Aunt Imperia, of the Murder of his Uncle, for which, together with their Accessaries Astonicus and Donato, they are apprehended and hanged.

IN the city of Venice there dwelt a gentleman, named Angelo Morofini, a young man of about twenty-four years of age, descended of a noble family, but by profession himself a merchant; he was tall and slender, with a sanguine complexion, bright chestnut-coloured hair, and much manly beauty: young as he was he had already made two voyages to Constantinople and Alexandria, in which he had spent about five

or six years, and, through his wisdom and industry, got wealth and reputation, insomuch that his deportment promised a fortune equal, if not superior to his birth. Holding it not prudent yet to marry, or which is worse, to pass his time lasciviously at home among the courtezans of Venice, he undertook a third voyage to Constantinople, in company of signor Astonicus and signor Phippo Donato, two young gentlemen, his intimate acquaint-





acquaintance, but were forced by a storm to put into the harbour of Ancona : where being obliged to tarry by contrary winds, on the third day early in the morning Morosini went to mas; where, at her devotion, he saw a young lady incomparably fair, at whose sight he was so enamoured with affection to her, that he could willingly resign all the powers and faculties of soul and body to her service.

Mas being ended, he followed her out of the chapel, and with great respect and civility offered his service to wait upon her home, and after several compliments obtained the favour to take her by the hand, and conducted her to her father's house, whose name was signior Hieronimo Bondino, and she his only daughter signiora Imperia ; Morosini at the door took his leave, but begged the honour to wait upon her in the afternoon, whispering in her ear, that so great was the violence of his passion to her, that he feared he should not be able to acquit himself with that decency as became a cavalier, to a person of her merits and quality.

In the afternoon he visited her, acquainted her with his name and quality, and intended voyage to Constantinople, but chiefly with his resolution to seek her in marriage, both of herself and her father : and so expert was he, that in three weeks, the winds continuing contrary, he made her many visits and amorous courtships, and at last obtained her consent to be his wife at his return from Constantinople. He then addressed himself to her father Bondino, who was so averse to it, that neither his intreaties or her tears, could melt his heart into a better temper. This grieved the lovers to the

heart, for the master of the ship had sent word, that the wind blowing fair, he should with all expedition set sail. Morosini seeing the necessity of his departure, again moved Bondino for his consent, but he proved inexorable, when going to bid Imperia adieu, he sacredly vowed to live unmarried till his return, which should be within a year, and then to marry her ; and as a pledge of his constancy, presented her with a rich diamond ring from his finger, and she him with a fine bracelet of orient pearl, as a sign of their mutual contract ; to which Astonicus and Donato were both witnesses. This done, they took horse for Ancona, and presently embarked for Constantinople.

Bondino, three months after, provided her with a husband, old signior Palmerius, a rich merchant of Ancona, at least sixty years of age, deformed in his body, and sullen and morose in temper ; but the old dotard being so charmed with Imperia's youth and beauty, and so much encouraged by the countenance given him by her father, that frequently coming to his house, he made downright love to her. Her father at the same time having charged her to receive him with all respect, and accept his addresses, which with tears she told him she could not obey, as she was fixed already, and would marry no person but Morosini : Bondino with fury in his face, told her he expected no answer but her dutiful compliance with his commands, and in a passion left her to the company of old Palmerius, who entered at the same time ; and with all the kind expressions he was master of, offered her the entire command of himself and his fortune, in exchange for her love : she

told him, if that was his errand she did assure him, she could not dispose of that which was already in the possession of another, and then left him to his own meditations. Palmerius returned to Ancona, but two months after, to the great joy of Bondino, made a second visit, and both strongly importuned Imperia to consummate the marriage. But she would neither hear the one nor accept the other, and Palmerius growing obstinate in his suit, and her father resolute in his commands, to avoid which, she locked herself up in her chamber, and concluded, that her only preservation could be in the company of Morosini, whose return she earnestly desired, and accordingly furnished signior Mercario, her faithful servant, with gold for his journey, and this letter to her beloved Morosini :

IMPERIA to MOROSINI.

" **C**OULD you measure my affec-
 " tions by my sorrow for your ab-
 " sence, you could hardly tell whether I
 " love or grieve more ; for I am assured
 " that all the seas between Ancona and
 " Constantinople, are not able to wash
 " away your memory from my heart and
 " soul : nor can the sands of the shore
 " compare in number with those sighs
 " and tears I daily offer to you. If then
 " I am as dear to you, I heartily beg you
 " will leave Constantinople and come to
 " Loretto, for my father Bondino is
 " ready to force me to leave my young
 " Morosini for old and withered Palme-
 " rius. Judge now how unkind you will
 " be to send an excuse, and not bring
 " yourself. Farewel my dear, may the
 " angels preserve thee, and fill thy sails
 " with fair and prosperous winds, till

" they land thee safe in the embraces of
 " thy

" IMPERIA."

Mercario, in three weeks time arrived at Constantinople, and finding out Morosini, he delivered his mistress Imperia's letter to him, which he received with much pleasure, and then, after liberally entertaining Mercario, he sent him back again to his beloved mistress, with the following answer :

MOROSINI to IMPERIA.

" **Y**OUR health and constancy makes
 " me as joyful in the receipt of
 " your letter, as your father's disrespect
 " to me, and love to Palmerius, makes
 " me sorrowful. Our hearts are now fa-
 " credly united, and only live in two dif-
 " ferent bodies, which love and breathe
 " the same desires; and I would now at
 " your command return to Loretto, would
 " the necessity of my affairs give me
 " leave to quit Constantinople. The
 " signiory of Venice have, by their am-
 " bassador Landy, here resident, made
 " me consul of Aleppo, but what this
 " year cannot, the next shall perform.
 " O thou my dear and sweet Imperia,
 " repute it not ingratitude in me to send
 " you this letter, for I do declare in the
 " presence of men and angels, my ex-
 " cuse is as sincerely true and unfeigned
 " as my affection to Imperia, which can
 " never die but with

" MOROSINI."

Imperia received this letter both with anger and joy, with anger because he came not in person, and with joy that it came from him. But her father one way, and Palmerius another still haunted her at all times and places without intermission ;
 who

who finding after six months more elapsed his labour lost, he resolved at once to strike at all; and to that end proffered Bondino, that if Imperia would become his wife, he would endow her with the one half of his lands, and give up all his personal estate into his hands to purchase her more. This offer so won Bondino, that in haste he told his daughter the generous proffer of Palmerius, and bid her dispose herself to marry him speedily, or else he would utterly renounce and for ever disown her to be his daughter.

Imperia heard her father's cruel commands, which she only answered with sighs and tears; but at last told him: "Sir, you know I both saw and engaged my love to Morosini, before I ever knew Palmerius, nor can his riches compare with Morosini's virtues, heaven, that is a witness to those vows I made Morosini, will certainly punish my perfidiousness; nor is it out of disobedience to your commands, that I reject Palmerius, but in respect to those sacred oaths I made Morosini." Bondino after several threats left her, who presently resolved to send Mercario with a gold watch set with diamonds, and a second letter to Morosini, in these words:

IMPERIA to MOROSINI.

"I HAD little thought that profit or preferment had been dearer to you than Imperia, or that the segniory of Venice, or their ambassador Landy, had more power to have staid you in Aleppo, than I to have obtained your return to Loretto; judge now what affection I may suppose you to have, when by your voluntary absence, you will wholly resign me to another, and

"that Palmerius must be my husband, when I desire nothing more than to live and die your wife. Come away therefore, my dear Morosini, and blame not me but yourself, if your absence and my father's obstinacy bereave me of my sweet Morosini, and you of the dear

"IMPERIA".

Morosini having read this letter, blushed to see himself thus outdone by her in kindness; after feasting of Mercario, and generously rewarding him for his pains, he sent him back to Imperia with a fine wrought chain of gold, and a rich diamond ring fastened to it. Likewise a curious pair of Turkish embroidered bracelets, and the following letter:

MOROSINI to IMPERIA.

"YOUR beauty and affection shall both command my resolution and myself; I will therefore shorten the time of my stay, and convert a whole year into a few months; for if Imperia become the wife of Palmerius, then Morosini can never be himself: and to tell you no more than the bare truth of my heart, I value the company of my dear Imperia more than all the preferments in the world, or all the treasures of the east. Live then, O my adorable Imperia, to be my wife, as I will live and die thy loving and faithful husband,

"MOROSINI."

Imperia received this letter with great joy, but it was suddenly blasted by the cruelty of Bondino, who, to bring her to his will, debared her of all liberty, taking away her jewels, and best wearing apparel, whereat she was so cast down, that despairing

sparing of Morofini's return, and over come by the tyranny of her father, and the importunity of Palmerius, she at length with much reluctance, granted him his suit, and in three days after was solemnly married to him.

While affairs went thus at Loretto, ten months after his promise, Morofini with his two friends, Astonicus and Donato, landed at Ancona, where Mercario meeting him, saluted him with the news of Imperia's marriage with Palmerius; at which they much grieved. By this time Imperia heard of their arrival, and Mercario was employed to beg a private visit of her, which was immediately granted, and the next night in her own house they met. At Morofini's first entrance into her chamber, she fell at his feet and begged his pardon; he took her up with all the tenderness imaginable, and then with mutual embraces revived those affections which their long absence might have buried in oblivion; and as he promised her that she should be his only love, so she willingly protested to him that he should be more her husband than Palmerius; and then they parted.

Next morning Morofini and his two companions made a publick visit to Palmerius, and were courteously received by him, and in the afternoon Morofini and Imperia met in a garden remote from the house, where she was not able to deny whatever he had courage to ask. These unlawful pleasures made her slight her old husband, and in a short time so bold was she grown in the practice of her adulterous embraces, that they were now become customary; of which her servants, especially Richardo, nephew to Palmerius, a youth of eighteen, could not but

take notice of, and made their remarks upon it. Morofini was not content thus to enjoy Imperia, but knowing that his expences far exceeded his estate, and considering that Palmerius's wealth would bear up his port, and Imperia so much his own, that she was fit for any impression, and capable of any design that would advance his fortune, resolved to murder Palmerius. To this end, at their next meeting they consulted on it, and it was agreed to be most safe to stifle him in bed between two pillows, which would leave no cause of suspicion behind it. Morofini after dinner invited Astonicus and Donato to walk in the fields, and there acquainted them with the design, and that it was his own and Imperia's request they would assist them in it; which Astonicus and Donato cheerfully promised, and having sworn secrecy to each other, they returned to their lodging. The next day Morofini related all to his Imperia, who overjoyed thereat, concluded to have the business finished the next night after.

The dismal night was now come, and the clock struck twelve, when Morofini, Astonicus, and Donato, went to Palmerius's house, where at the street door they found Imperia ready to receive them, and leaving Donato to secure the door, Morofini and Astonicus leading Imperia without their shoes, in woollen pumps up the stairs to her own chamber, she gave each of them a pillow, and directed them to Palmerius's chamber, where entering in, whilst she guarded the door, they stifled him, then gently shutting the door, with silence went back to their lodging, and Imperia to her bed.

The next morning Imperia went to mass at St. Francis's church, in the inter-
rim

rim came a messenger with a letter from Bondino to Palmerius, which his nephew Richardo receiving, carried up to his uncle's chamber, where on the floor he found a rich glove, which he knew belonged to Morosini, and put it in his pocket, when going to his bedside, he drew the curtains, and found him dead in his bed. At this deplorable sight he made so loud an outcry, that several of the servants came up, who, seeing their master dead, believed he had stop't his own breath by putting the orange in his mouth; but Richardo remembering Morosini's glove, which he found, and the familiar dalliances he had often seen between his aunt and him, went presently and acquainted the podestate with the murder of his uncle, and strongly charged it upon his aunt and Morosini.

The podestate being satisfied in the circumstances, sent his two sons with his coach to St. Francis, to allure Imperia thither, who was no sooner come, but he charged her and her innamorato Morosini, with the murder of her husband Palmerius, for which she was confined that day to his own house, and sent his officers to seize Morosini, who so strongly beset his lodging, that though he and his two friends were well armed, yet they thought it their best way to make no resistance, therefore delivering up their persons, pistols, and swords, they were committed to the common prison of the city, whither Imperia had been sent before.

When the news of this lamentable business was brought from Ancona to Loreto, Imperia's cruel father was no sooner ascertained of it, but the grief of finding his son-in-law Palmerius murdered, his daughter imprisoned, and in danger of

losing her life for the same, added to his natural affection for her, and the dread of the infamy of her punishment, all together threw him into such disorders and perturbations of mind, that they occasioned a sudden and violent fever, which killed him immediately.

Morosini, Astonicus, and Donato, were separately examined, but neither of them would confess any thing; whereupon Astonicus was put to the rack, which torments he endured, affirming his innocence; an hour after Donato was adjudged to the scarpines, who being but of a weak constitution, his right foot no sooner felt the fire, but with tears he confessed the whole in all its circumstances. In the afternoon the judges sent for Morosini, Imperia, and Astonicus, when they were charged upon the confession of Donato, who was brought in a chair to confront them; whereupon they immediately owned the fact, and confirmed Donato's account of it. Upon which they were all four sentenced to be hanged the next morning at the common place of execution.

In the mean time, Imperia had notice that signor Alexander Bondino, her father's brother, who was a famous senator and judge at Rome, had obtained her pardon from the Pope, upon which Imperia asked the messenger if Morosini was pardoned too; who answered, No: "Then, said she, I will die with him, for life would be a burthen without her Morosini."

The next day, first Donato and Astonicus were executed, then came Morosini, who taking leave of Imperia, desired her to accept of life, and so was turned off. Imperia was solicited by the judges and her relations, but she refusing them with disdain, was presently turned off.

GOD'S REVENGE

AGAINST

MURDER and ADULTERY.

HISTORY XXVII.

ARGUMENT.

Father Justinian a Priest, and Adrian an Inn-keeper, poison De Laurier, who lodged in the House of the latter, and then bury him in an Orchard; where, a Month after, a Wolf digs him up, and devours a great Part of his body; which Father Justinian and Adrian understanding, they fly for it, but are both afterwards taken and hanged.

A Rich goldsmith of Dijon, the capital city of Burgundy, named Monf. de Laurier, aged about threescore years, having been at Frankfort Mart, and there sold many jewels, for which he had received about 1700 crowns, as he returned home converted them into double pistoles, which he carried behind him in his cloak bag, and some remaining jewels in a private leather girdle next his body.

It happening that he fell sick on the road he put up at an inn at Salynes, of which the master's name was Adrian, and

that of his wife, Isabella; he of a base and profligate disposition, she courteous, chaste, and religious. Laurier's sickness increasing, he desired Adrian to send for a physician, who, feeling his pulse, told him he was dangerously ill of a fever, to ease which he let him blood, and then gave him hopes of a recovery; notwithstanding all which he found himself very weak, and his sickness rather much to increase than diminish.

As for Isabella, according to the laws of hospitality, she attended him with much respect and diligence, and, in a word,





word, performed the part and duty of a good Christian and a good woman; but for her husband Adrian, his disposition was turned another way, for he imagining the merchant had much treasure with him, to possess which he prayed that he might speedily die, nay he had some intention of murder, in order to make up the ruins of his shattered fortune. De Laurier growing worse, desired his host to bring him a priest to give him the sacrament; this Adrian performed, and brought him one named father Justinian, exactly of his own humour and complexion.

This ungodly priest having given De Laurier the extremum unction, viewing a cloak-bag behind his pillow in which was supposed to be much treasure, could not forbear wishing with his landlord Adrian to share the booty. These two debauched companions being very intimate, and having communicated their thoughts to each other, agreed to be partners in the murder of the goldsmith. But Adrian had folly enough, first to divulge their intent to his wife Isabella, with hopes of persuading her to be an accomplice with them. But she, virtuous woman, being astonished at the bloody proposition, and trembling, with tears, used many intreaties to dissuade him from it, which had no other effect than to make him misuse her more than he was wont; and at length came to the resolution of poisoning him the next day, and divide his treasure. To this end, Adrian was to purchase the poison, and father Justinian to administer it to him in the wafer; but before he went to work, the Friar, not knowing that Adrian had talked to his wife Isabella on this affair, proposed that she should be drawn into their bloody conspiracy, for without her

he thought it could not be safely accomplished; Adrian told him, that he had already endeavoured to persuade her to it, but to no purpose. However father Justinian being willing yet to make another trial on her himself, they both set a-fresh on her, to bring at least her consent, if not her hand, to the murdering of De Laurier: But Isabella being still the same woman, she heard these bloody persuasions of theirs with infinite dereliction. She was too much a christian to consent to the murder of this honest man; and therefore, with tears, she sought to divert them from it, but especially her husband, because, quoth she, the issue thereof will infallibly prove ruinous to you both. They were both much grieved at her resolute denial; and yet to make a virtue of necessity, they falsely seemed to be dissuaded from the murder, by the sight of her tears; wherefore, with a prophane dissimulation, they told her, that God by her religious speeches, had now made them wholly abandon their bloody attempt against De Laurier, as also the very thought thereof; and therefore conjured her to keep secrecy herein from all the world, which she willingly did: but she feared their conversion was feigned, and strongly suspected De Laurier's life was at stake.

Justinian and Adrian, to make clear work, having resolved that Isabella should be speedily removed from Salynes, to some place in the country, without once seeing De Laurier, a favourable occasion seconded their damnable desires herein: for there was unexpectedly brought them word, that her father, who dwelt four leagues from Salynes was very sick and not like to live; whereupon Adrian presently

sently dispatched away his wife Isabella to him, and with her their maid Graceta. But before her departure, she was desirous to see De Laurier, and to take leave of him, but her husband would by no means permit her.

Poor De Laurier took his hostess Isabella's sudden departure from him very pensively, and far the more, that she could not be permitted to see him before she went; he held it a fatal omen to him, in regard she was as diligent as her husband was distasteful to him; for that her care towards him pleased him as much as his harsh looks discontented him; and now it was that God first imprinted in his thoughts a fearful suspicion that Adrian and father Justinian the priest, had assuredly some dangerous plot against his gold and life; for he saw himself reduced to the miserable condition of being allowed to see nobody but these two, who were the two persons alive he the most disliked. He prayed them to send for his physician, but they told him he was gone to France. This answer did very much apall the sick man, whose fears now hourly increased, every moment he wished himself, or at least his gold, in Dijon, with his son Leonardo, or he at Salynes to comfort him with his sight and presence.

De Laurier still concealed his riches from the priest and host, with the greatest art he could, but apprehended that the imagination they had of his treasure would prove the ruin of him, for he observed many suspicious signs in their words and looks, seeing them frequently whispering together at a distance.

Adrian being eager to put their hellish plot in execution, told father Justinian they delayed the time too long, and

pressed him to make more dispatch in the business. The priest having no less malice than the host, but a little more cunning, told him that it would be downright folly in them to hazard their necks upon an uncertainty, therefore they ought to use some means to find out whether he had any money or no, and if it proved that he had, which he scarce doubted, he should be as much for dispatch as himself. The friar then in most pathetick terms advised the sick man to write over to his son at Dijon, and proffered to carry the letter over himself and deliver it safely into his hands. De Laurier thanked the priest for this courtesy, but, supposing that it proceeded from some treachery, rather than any real kindness towards him, he declined his offer. But afterwards considering that if he should die, and his son not have the knowledge of the place where his effects were, he must be undone thereby, so altering his resolution, he determined to write, and therefore prayed Adrian, his host, to undertake the journey, which he most chearfully promised to perform. The next morning very early De Laurier wrote the following letter, and delivered it to him, wishing him a good journey and a speedy return.

DE LAURIER to LEONARDO.

“ ABOUT seven weeks since, coming from Frankfort mart, I fell
 “ sick at Salynes, where I still lie very
 “ weak in body, and much discontented in mind, in the house of the
 “ bearer hereof, whom I purposely send
 “ over to you, to pray and command you
 “ to come to me with all possible speed.
 “ I have with me here, in gold and jewels,
 “ to the value of seventeen hundred
 crowns,

" crowns, and, for some private reasons
 " fear that neither those nor my life are
 " in safety here; come away with an
 " intent to find me dead or dying. Con-
 " ceal this letter from all the world. Be
 " civil to the messenger but trust him
 " not; God prosper you, whether or no
 " you ever see your father.

" DE LAURIER."

As soon as De Laurier had delivered Adrian his letter, father Justinian went down with him on pretence of seeing him take horse: but these two wretched villains deceived his honest hopes, and going together into a private parlour, broke open the letter, which glutting the hopes of their new discovered Indies, they committed it to the flames, resolving that same night should be the last of De Laurier's. To which end, Adrian shut himself up in his own house privately, and especially from the knowledge of De Laurier, and so here ended his pretended journey to Dijon before it was begun. He had already provided himself with some strong poison, and had likewise sent Thomas his ostler a day's journey into the country upon some feigned business, to the end that he should be no witness of this cruel fact of theirs; and then, all things being prepared in readiness, father Justinian going up to De Laurier's chamber, treacherously entertained him with the hope of recovering his health, the haste of Adrian's journey, and consequently of his speedy return with his son Leonardo to him from Dijon. About midnight he prayed father Justinian to give him a spoonful or two of warm wine that stood on a table in the room, when this monster, pleased with

the opportunity that offered itself, infused the poison he had with him into it, which operated so quick, that in less than an hour, after undergoing some strong convulsive pangs, he expired.

As soon as these miscreants had finished their business, they tore off the leather girdle from his Waist, which was full of gold, and then breaking open the casket that he had carefully laid under his pillow, found in it the full sum that had been formerly mentioned, which they equally shared between them.

The murdered body growing cold, they began to provide for its burial, and having dug a pit in Adrian's orchard, they buried it there in his shirt. Three weeks being past over, Adrian thought it time to send for his wife Isabella home, which he did, and she wondering much at her husband's unusual finery, enquired for Monsieur De Laurier; but he, putting on a brazen face, and tempering his tongue with falsehood, told her, that he departed safe and well about ten days before; that he gave him fifty crowns for the charges of his entertainment and lodging; and for a token of his love, had likewise left her and father Justinian each twenty crowns in gold: but his wife Isabella deemed these speeches of her husband to be false, and suspecting that he, with the assistance of father Justinian, had sent that good old man to an untimely grave, burst into immoderate tears. He proffered her the twenty crowns in gold, but, she fearing it to be the price of innocent blood, her conscience was too prevalent, and her heart and soul too powerful with God to accept thereof, therefore she refused it with as much disdain as he endeavoured to give

it her with affection. And that the reader may the more fully be informed of her integrity and charity herein, I mean to the present and well-wishers of absent De Laurier, who she silently dreaded was for ever absent from this world.

That very day month after Adrian and the friar had buried the body of De Laurier, a ravening wolf, being roused in the adjacent wood, seeking for his prey, came into Adrian's orchard, as if purposely sent thither by God; where scenting some dead carrion, and having fiercely with his paws and snout tore up some earth, at last pulled up the newly buried corpse; when instantly some hunters of Salynes, being assured by some peasants in the fields that the wolf had passed that way, and having closely followed him with their dogs, at last found him in Adrian's orchard, eating, as they imagined, the flesh of some dead beast; but being terrified by the noise of the hunters shouts and cries, he presently forsook his prey, and saved his life by flight; whilst all the gentlemen, as if led by the immediate finger of God, with their javelins in their hands, rushed into the orchard to see what the wolf had preyed on, where to their great amazement, beholding the dead body, they all concurred in opinion, that it was that of some person murdered and buried there, of which fact they strongly suspected Adrian, his wife, and servants, as it lay thus in his orchard; so having placed a strong guard of their own servants about the house, to see that no one come out of it, they went away themselves to inform the criminal judges of what they had discovered.

In the mean time the harmless Isabella, hearing these loud outcries at her doors so

soon in the morning, in the absence of her husband, who lay from home that night, immediately supposed it proceeded from somewhat relating to old De Laurier, and though she was in no danger from thence herself, was greatly afraid the storm would fall upon her husband, who, as she strongly suspected, had imbrued his hands in the blood of that honest man. As for Thomas the ostler, and Graceta her maid, although this unusual noise made them hastily forsake their beds, and put on their cloaths, yet, as they dreaded the persons without might be some gang of lawless peasants, or some disbanded soldiers from Flanders come to rob their master's house in his absence, they were afraid either to open the doors, or look out at the windows. By this time the hunters brought the criminal judges to the place to view the dead body, and with them a great number of inhabitants of Salynes, and among the rest, the physician, who had attended Laurier, and knew the dead body, therefore very earnestly cried out, that it was a goldsmith of Dijon, named Monsieur De Laurier, who lately lay sick in Adrian's house, and that he not long since visited him; he affirmed that he perfectly well knew him to be the same, and verily believed that he was brought to some untimely end, and buried there.

The judges believing the report, caused the body to be searched, but no wounds were found about it that could be supposed to be the cause of his death; however, deeming Adrian, his wife Isabella, and their servants to be the murderers, they broke open the doors, and missing Adrian, they seized on his wife, and then brought her to view the body, with whose murder they flatly charged her, and

and enquired what was become of Adrian himself. At seeing this unexpected and sorrowful object Isabella was all in tears, and told them that her husband Adrian lay not at home the last night, and freely owned to them that the dead body was that of Monsieur De Laurier, a goldsmith of Dijon, who for some time lay sick in her house as he came from Frankfort mart, but how he came to his end, she took heaven and earth to witness she knew not, and with this deposition her maid and ostler agreed in every circumstance. The judges then caused a strict search to be made in Salynes for Adrian, by which it was discovered that he lay the night before in father Justinian's house; that these debauchees had two whores in their company drinking and revelling all night, and that upon the very first report of De Laurier's body being found in the orchard, they took to their heels. This flight sufficiently proclaimed their guilt, especially to their judges, who, to find out the whole of this deplorable matter, adjudged Isabella, Thomas, and Graceta, to the rack: as for Thomas and Graceta, their innocence made them endure the torture with admirable patience and constancy, for they could never be drawn to reveal that of which they were ignorant. But for Isabella, the importunate requests and solicitations of many of her honest neighbours, did engrave such deep impressions in the hearts of the judges, that changing their resolutions, they dispensed with her for that torture: when sending every way to pursue Adrian and father Justinian, they contented themselves to keep the mistress, the man, and the maid, close prisoners. They likewise speedily sent away post to Dijon to acquaint Leo-

nardo with the accident which had befallen his father De Laurier here in Salynes, who at the first alarm of the news seemed to drown himself in tears, and rather to fly than post away from Dijon to Salynes, where he conferred with the criminal judges, who reported to him the flight of father Justinian and Adrian, as also of their imprisoning his wife Isabella, and servants, in whose house his father lay sick. Leonardo visited the body, and found it to be that of his father, at the sight whereof he burst forth into many bitter tears and lamentable cries; when giving him a solemn burial in the next church, he informed the judges, that to his knowledge his father had store of gold and jewels about him; he therefore intreated them, that Adrian and father Justinian's houses might be searched for the same, which was performed; but finding no part thereof, and both of them fled, he was confident that their flight proclaimed them guilty of his father's murder, and consequently that Isabella, her ostler, and maid, were accessaries thereunto.

Whereupon repairing again to the judges, with many importunities prayed them, that all three might be put to the rack, thereby to find out the truth of this lamentable accident. The judges approved of Leonardo's affection to his dead father, but as impartial officers of justice, they told him, they had already caused Thomas and Graceta to be racked, and they both had strongly justified their innocence of his father's murder. And as for their mistress Isabella, they informed him they were fully assured that she was innocent, as she was many days absent with her father in the country, when

when by all circumstances his father was murdered; and because the general voice of all her neighbours reported her to be a very virtuous and religious woman, and that therefore they must needs exempt her from those torments.

But they told him farther that in honour to justice, and to see what God and time might produce, they would detain them all in prison for the space of three months, in which time, concurring with him in opinion that father Justinian and Adrian undoubtedly were the murderers of his father De Laurier, they persuaded him with all possible speed and diligence to pursue them in the country, until he had detected, apprehended, and brought them to justice; which Leonardo did, but with such extraordinary zeal, that he forgot a singular circumstance of no mean importance, the omission whereof might very well have made his enquiry in vain, for he forgot at Salynes to take with him the description of their persons.

As for the two execrable wretches, father Justinian and Adrian, their guilty thoughts and consciences, like bloodhounds, incessantly pursuing them, stupified their judgments, they hushed themselves up all the day in some thick wood or grove, and travelled all night from Salynes, notwithstanding which, the next morning, to their unspeakable fear and vexation, they found themselves again within a league thereof. In this manner for eight nights together they travelled on foot through unknown ways and woods: Here let the reader behold the wonderful justice of God towards them, for at the end thereof they were not as yet gone seven leagues from Salynes, and they could not ascend the least hillock, but

looking back the towers of Salynes were still apparent and conspicuous to them, as if they pursued and followed them, which indeed struck extream fear to their guilty hearts, and infinite terror to their trembling consciences. But this circumstance of God's wrath and vengeance towards them was seconded by another, wherein his divine providence and justice miraculously appears and shine forth. For the tenth evening after their flight from Salynes, being extreamly wearied and tired with their foot travels, within a mile of the entrance of a great wood they spied a stray horse, without a rider, saddle, or bridle, which they resolved to seize on, and having come up to him, Adrian presently knew that it was the horse of the murdered De Laurier, which he had turned loose: being extremely rejoiced at this unexpected piece of fortune, they made a halter of their garters, and casting their cloak under them, they both rode away on him, and night drawing on, they were in hopes to recover the town of Pontarlin before break of day: but God here was strongly bent against them, so that this horse which they had taken for the cause of their joy, did very shortly prove their destruction: for God, in his justice, carrying their horse, and he them, straying all night through contrary winds and lanes, they the next morning at break of day, to their unspeakable grief, found themselves three leagues off from Pontarlin.

Here their horse began to fail, and the more he lessened his pace, the more their apprehensions increased. Consulting what to do, whether to retire with their horse into the next wood till night, or advance towards Pontarlin, seeing the coast clear they resolved to ride to the town, as it

was

was very early in the morning; and that they might get there the sooner, Adrian was content to walk, and let father Justinian ride, both resolving to put the most chearful countenances upon their perplexed hearts. Being come near the town, the first person that saw them, by God's providence, was Leonardo, who since he left Salynes, had searched every village and town to apprehend the murderers of his father. As he drew near them he saw that the horse whereon the friar rode, was the same colour as his father's, which struck suspicion into his mind, that these were his father's murderers, especially as he saw one in the habit of a friar. To be more fully satisfied he resolved to ride by them, thereby the better to observe the horse and men; but did it with as much seeming negligence as possible: when knowing the horse perfectly well to be his father's, he had no doubt of these being the wretches he sought after, therefore he kept them in sight, which, that he might do without giving them any jealousy, alighting from his horse, he stepped behind a hedge, as if it were to ease nature, but his intent was to have them pass before him that he might keep a watchful eye upon them. At his getting off his horse, they began to fear this stranger was sent to take them, and were thinking to trust to their heels and the wood for safety; but seeing him behind the hedge, they took fresh courage, resolving to proceed on their way to the town, but still looked back on him; this was carefully observed by Leonardo, who came after them a soft trot, contenting himself to see them before him, as knowing his horse was far swifter than theirs, and that he could fetch them at

his pleasure. By this time they arrived at Pontarlin, when being hungry, they called for some refreshment, and being apprehensive of danger, they privately hid themselves in their chamber. But as the vigilant eye of Leonardo saw where they entered, so having put up at another inn close by, presently with much celerity he tript away to theirs, where they were at breakfast, and calling for the host thereof, he told him that the priest and the other man which entered his house, had murdered his father in Salynes, and earnestly prayed him to step and fetch the criminal officers of that town to apprehend them for the same, and till his return that he would give him two of his servants to guard the doors that they might not escape; the host speeded away to the officers, who presently arriving with him, Leonardo sorrowfully related that this priest, named Justinian, and Adrian, who was an inn-keeper of Salynes, and now above, had very lately in his own house, murdered his father, who was a goldsmith of Dijon, and robbed him of much gold and jewels, and then buried him in his orchard, therefore requested them to do him justice, by speedily apprehending them. They then went up to their chamber, where they found them tipling, and Leonardo immediately charged them with the murder of his father, but they denied it with several oaths, which Leonardo hearing, he intreated the officers to search them both narrowly for his father's gold and jewels, which they did, one after the other; when they found quilted up in their doublet and hose some gold, and rich jewels, yet they denied the murder, swearing they found this treasure on the highway.

Leonardo, notwithstanding all this, assured the officers that all the gold and jewels, with much more, were his father's, and therefore were now of right become his, and demanded possession of them: but the officers denied this request, telling him, that they must take an inventory of them, to be sent with the two prisoners to the judges of Salynes, under whose jurisdiction they were; so for that night they committed father Justinian and Adrian to separate prisons; which was no sooner done, but Leonardo sent away post to Salynes, to acquaint the judges of his apprehending the murderers of his father, and at the end of two days the prisoners were sent for, and brought from Pontarlin to Salynes in safe custody.

The very next morning the criminal judges sent for them to one of their houses, and first severally privately, and then publickly by confrontation, did examine them on this murder, when with much vehemency they continued firm in their denial; but being satisfied with the information of Isabella, the physician, and servants, together with their sudden flight, and Laurier's property being found upon them, adjudged them both to the rack, at the hearing of which they seemed to be daunted.

Adrian was first brought to the rack, who, though he was weak of constitution, yet he was still so strong in his villainy, that he could not be drawn to confess it, but with much obstinacy suffered himself to be fastened thereto, whereof the judges being advertised, held it expedient to delay his torments for a time, to make trial of father Justinian, and see if he would be more flexible, who at the very first wrench of the rack, con-

fessed the murder in all its circumstances, and that only himself and Adrian were the actors of it; whereupon the judges sending again for Adrian, caused him to be brought to the rack, but first held it fit to confront him with his bloody companion, who affirming the truth of what he had said, Adrian was daunted thereat, and at the sight of the rack, which was again prepared and brought for him; he then confirmed all father Justinian's confession, upon which they condemned them both to be hanged the next morning.

About ten o'clock the next morning, the two malefactors were brought to the place of execution. The first who ascended the ladder was Adrian, who spoke but little, only he took it to his death, that his dear wife Isabella, his servant-maid Graceta, and his ostler Thomas, were as innocent of the murder of De Laurier, as he himself here again confessed he was guilty. He prayed God to forgive him, beseeching all present to pray for him, and for his wretched and miserable soul; when casting his handkerchief over his face, he was turned off. Instantly after him father Justinian mounted the ladder, who, in his looks and countenance seemed to be very penitent; when repeating some Ave Maries, and often making the sign of the cross, he was likewise turned off.

And thus was the miserable life and death of this impious priest, and wicked and bloody host, and in this sharp manner did God justly revenge himself and punish them with shame and confusion for this cruel and lamentable murder. Immediately after the execution the judges set Isabella, her maid, and ostler, free from their undeserved durance.

G O D's

30 A



Hist. XXVIII.



GOD'S REVENGE

AGAINST

MURDER and ADULTERY.

HISTORY XXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

Hippolito murders Garcia in the Street by Night, for which he is hanged. Dominica and her Chamber-Maid Denisa poison Roderigo the Husband of the first: Denisa afterwards strangles her own new-born Infant, and throws it into a Pond, for which she is hanged. On the Ladder she confesses that she was an Accomplice with her Lady Dominica, in poisoning her Husband Roderigo, for which Dominica is likewise apprehended and hanged.

IN the rich and populous city of Granada in Spain, there dwelt an ancient lady, named Dona Alicia Cervantella, who was nobly descended, and by her late husband Don Pedro de Cardinas, who died a chief commander in the West-Indies, she had two children, a son and a daughter, the first named Garcia, and the other Dominica. The one about twenty years of age, of a mild disposition, sober and judicious; the latter about eighteen, exceeding fair and beautiful, but of

great levity and indiscretion, which the mother being afraid might get the better of her chastity, was obliged to keep a watchful eye over all her actions. There was at this time in the city of Granada, a rich old gentleman, named Hippolito, nobly descended, but more than threescore years of age, and much subject to the gout. This old Hippolito, in the winter of his age, falling in love with our fair young lady Dominica, and by applying to the mother, sought the daughter in marriage;

marriage; but she could by no means relish his person, therefore by her frequent importunities to her brother Garcia, she got him to prevail upon their mother to alter her good opinion and esteem of him, and it was determined to give him a flat denial; but his inclinations to this delicate young creature being so strong, he would not be said nay, and, though his reception was oftentimes very cool, he still made them daily visits, till at last they downright affronted him, and Dominica told him, he was fitter to be married to his grave than a young wife.

But the young lady, although she liked not Hippolito for a husband, was very desirous, nay impatient, to have another that she could like, and with a forwardness not at all agreeable to the modesty and decent behaviour of her mother, desired that she would provide one for her. Her mother, in very modest terms, checked her for this boldness, telling her, that if she behaved as a virtuous woman ought, no doubt, but in good time, she would have one: but her wanton daughter being not satisfied with this general answer, very immodestly importuned her brother Don Garcia to solicit her mother upon the same account; whereat he rather laughed than gave ear; but afterwards ruminating and considering with himself that this foolish levity might hereafter prove a disgrace to herself, and a dishonour to their family, if not provided against in time, he consulted his mother thereon, who concurring with him in opinion, resolved to use her endeavours to prevent the danger they apprehended.

In the mean time it fell out that Dominica going with her mother one morning to the church of the Benedictine Monks,

was so little intent on her devotion, that while she was on her knees, her wandering eyes meeting a very handsome young gentleman richly dressed, who was likewise on his, and feeling such a sudden emotion in her heart to be better acquainted with him, she beckoned to her mother's man to come to her, and whispered him in the ear to make a strict enquiry who he was, which the fellow presently found out by examining his own servants, and as soon as matters were over, informed his young lady that his name was Roderigo, son and heir to Don Emanuel de Cortez. Having thus learned who he was, she resolved to let neither her mother or brother rest till they endeavoured to procure him for her husband, for she was so much enflamed with her desires towards him, that she thought there could be no happiness in life without the enjoyment of his company.

Having let her mother and brother into the secret of her inclinations, they were not a little pleased that she had cast her eyes on one whose birth and fortune would make his alliance an honour to them, and therefore resolved to use their best endeavours to gratify her affection: so Don Garcia finding an opportunity to get into his company, gave him an invitation to his mother's house, which Don Roderigo accepting of, the young lady Dominica falling as it were by accident in his way, he was extremely charmed with her person and conversation, and begged leave of her mother and self to pay his addresses to her, which was very readily consented to on their side; but when he came to break the matter to his own father Don Emanuel, he was not at all pleased, knowing Dona Cervantella to be in no extraordinary

traordinary circumstances, and therefore used his endeavours to divert his son from such a disadvantageous pursuit.

Roderigo alledged to his father his true affection to the beauty and virtues of Dominica, and that her descent was no way inferior to his: but his father being of an exceeding covetous disposition would have wealth outweigh beauty, and so was resolute to hear no more of this matter, whereat his son Roderigo was much discontented. Yet, nevertheless, he had cast his affection so deeply on the fresh and delicate beauty of Dominica, that he could not refrain from frequently visiting Dona Cervantella's house, and seeking her daughter's company: to whom, notwithstanding his father's distaste of her, he yet gave strong hopes that he would be her husband, which ravished her with delight, and was very agreeable to her mother and brother.

But the order of our history invites us for a while to leave Don Roderigo to feast his eyes on the roses and lillies of his mistress's beauty, and again to return to our old dotard Hippolito, who now comes to perform a bloody part on the stage of our history. He saw with grief that he was refused by the lady Dominica, whom he loved far dearer than his life; and understanding that Don Roderigo de Cortez had gained her affection, and would shortly marry her, he thereupon turned his reason into rage, converted his judgment into revenge, and resolved to murder him by night, as he came out of the lady Cervantella's house; believing, that he being once dead, undoubtedly the fair Dominica would fall to his share. So being resolute in this his bloody design, consulted with himself, whether he should do it by himself, or by some second in-

strument; but finding it dangerous to effect it by another, because he must then commit his life to his courtesy; he therefore resolved to do it by himself: but first he thought it not improper, rather pertinent in him, to write Roderigo a letter, which he did in these terms, and sent it him by one of his own confident servants:

HIPPOLITO to RODERIGO.

“**W**ERE you informed but of the hundredth part of my dear affection to the fair Dominica, and of her's reciprocally to me, you would, if not out of honour, yet through judgment, give over your suit to her, and not let your obstinacy make you ridiculous, by imagining you can obtain her for a wife; for although she may feed your vanity with fair speeches, yet is her choice already fixt on me: and were you not a gentleman whom I love for your own sake, as I honour you for your father's, I should not so long have permitted your visits to her, which, upon this notice, if you refrain not for the future, you must expect I shall take such measures as will not be much to your credit.

“*HIPPOLITO.*”

Roderigo having received this letter, could not forbear smiling to see the extravagant folly thereof; for knowing perfectly well that both Dominica and her mother had resolved to hear no more of his suit, he hardly thought it worth an answer; but considering his quality, out of respect to that, he thought proper to return one by the same messenger; wherein he let him know that he had little reason to dread a rival of his age and infirmities,

ties, or at all to doubt of the constancy and affection of the fair Dominica, whose consent he was not only sure of to complete his happiness, but likewise of that of her mother and brother.

Hippolito was so incensed at this answer, that he resolved to put his design of murdering Roderigo into execution that night, having learned that he would then be with his mistress Dominica; therefore charging his pistol with three balls, he waited about the door for his coming out. Don Garcia unfortunately having some engagement that evening, and coming out by himself, was mistaken by Hippolito for Roderigo, who letting fly at him, pierced his body with all the three bullets, which instantly killed him. The report was heard, and the body of Don Garcia soon found, to the great grief of his mother, sister, and Don Roderigo, the last of whom, leaving some neighbours to comfort the ladies, went immediately to seek for the murderer, when it pleased God so to direct his course, as to find out this execrable old wretch Hippolito, who was limping along in the street, carrying only his dark lanthorn in his hand, having thrown away his pistol. Roderigo measuring things past by the present, and finding Hippolito alone at this unseasonable hour, God prompting him to suspect that he was the murderer of Don Garcia, seized him, and gave him to safe custody.

The next day all Granada rung of the murder, and of Don Hippolito's being imprisoned on suspicion of being guilty of it. Dona Cervantella going to the criminal judges, accused him of it, and although at his first examination he denied it, yet he was no sooner adjudged to the rack, than he confessed the whole matter,

and was sentenced to be hanged the day following, which was accordingly executed; most of the spectators pitied his age, but condemned the enormity of his crime, and himself shewed no contrition for it.

We must now speak of Don Emanuel de Cortez, who understanding that his son Roderigo frequented the house of Dona Cervantella, and the company of her daughter, also hearing of Don Garcia's murder, and his son being present, was much discontented; but to prevent the danger of his matching so much beneath himself, he resolved to deprive him of the sight of his charmer, and sent him to a feat of his, called Asnallos, about ten leagues off, with a strict injunction not to return till his farther orders. Roderigo was very sorrowful thus to quit the sight and company of his fair Dominica, with whom he left his heart; but a month was scarce expired before Cervantella and her daughter both wrote to him, inviting him to return, which he found himself strongly inclined to; but weighing the matter in his thoughts, conceived it his best way not to disoblige his father by suddenly returning without his consent; at the same time considering that Dominica's beauty could not so easily make him rich as his father's resentment might make him poor, he resolved to preserve his constancy to her, and yet retain his obedience to him; holding it no sin to temporize a little for his interest, building on the hopes that his mistress was as constant as she was fair.

Dominica being of a wanton disposition, and finding Roderigo's stay in the country exceed her expectation, was no longer able to preserve her chastity, but imparted her favours privately to two young gentlemen. However she carried on

on her intrigues not so close but her mother had notice of them, and first endeavoured to reclaim her by fair means; but finding they had no effect, she threatened to deprive her of her portion, and force her to end her days in a nunnery. This rather inflamed than quenched her libidinous desires, which her mother perceiving, to prevent her own disgrace in that of her daughter, she locked her up in her chamber, where with grief at being debarred from her pleasures, she grew sick, pale, and thin, which Cervantella took for a fit occasion to write to Roderigo again to hasten his return to Granada.

When Roderigo received an account of his dear Dominica's sickness, not doubting but that it was occasioned by his long absence from her, he bid the messenger assure the lady Cervantella and her daughter, that nothing should prevent his bringing an answer the next day himself. This gave no small pleasure to Dominica and her mother, and he was as good as his word in coming to Granada privately to visit them, and was received with much satisfaction by the old lady; and by the young one with all the transports that could be feigned by one who had divided her heart between several: however, his love for her was such, that he left no stone unturned to gain his father's consent for marrying her, which he at last with much difficulty obtained; and their nuptials were soon after celebrated at Granada with great pomp.

No husband could ever behave more courteously to a wife than Roderigo did to Dominica, for he willingly permitted her to go where she would, and return when she pleased, contrary to the custom of Spaniards, who hold it far more folly

than affection to give the same freedom to their wives which is customary in England; but the more her husband loved her, the more she slighted him, at which he much grieved, as did her mother and father-in-law; but as it is labour in vain to wash an Ethiopian white, so all of them could not reclaim Dominica, which he taking to heart, brought on a lingering consumption, whereat she the more hated him, because his illness prevented him from performing the duties of a husband towards her; but that might have given her little uneasiness, as she pursued those pleasures abroad which she was deprived of at home. Roderigo bewailed his fortune in marrying her, but yet loved her tenderly; notwithstanding, her love was so frozen to him, that she came not near him for several days together, but when he was so happy as to enjoy her company, it seemed to him as if his pain for that time gave him a truce.

In the disappointment her lascivious Inclinations met with from her sick husband, and with the hopes of one more agreeable to her lust, she resolved to make a compact with the devil to poison Roderigo, flattering herself, that as his body was worn almost to a skeleton, no one would have any suspicion of it. But not knowing how to procure any drugs for the purpose herself, she was constrained to employ some confidant in the affair, and for this end she thought she could not more safely entrust any one than her own chamber-maid Denisa, who had formerly been admitted into the secret of her several intrigues; and to draw her into a participation of the guilt of this murder, she bribed her with a present of fifty ducats, which entirely won her to her desires.

So,

So, without either the grace or fear of God, they were resolute in their rage, thinking every day a year before they had finished, and Dominica employed her maid Denisa secretly to buy some poison of a remote apothecary, which Dominica put into some white broth, and gave to her husband in the morning, before he was out of bed, under pretence of its being comfortable, and O grief to think! before night he died. Don Emanuel de Cortez, his father, being at that time gone to the city of Seville, about some important business, she, taking the Opportunity of his absence, thereby the better to overveil her crime, speedily caused his body to be put in a coffin, and buried rather privately, not in the manner suitable to his quality or her reputation; by which treatment her mother entertained a suspicion that Roderigo's was an untimely death by the hands of her daughter.

This mournful tragedy thus acted, our wretched Dominica, of a discontented wife, was now become a joyful widow; her lascivious desires raged both beyond the bounds of chastity, and the limits of discretion; for she would hearken to no advice from the lady Cervantella her mother, but forsook her house the greatest part of the day, and many whole nights, to keep company with those vicious gallants of her former acquaintance, with whom she delighted to lose her honour, to cast away her chastity, and to shipwreck her reputation, if not her soul; when neither thinking of God or her conscience, of heaven or hell, of her murdering self, or murdered husband, she incessantly abandoned herself to prophane and beastly whoredoms, and in a short time she made herself the laughter of

the worst, and the pity of the better sort of people in Granada; yea, her actions were so devoid of grace, and replete with impiety, that her own mother was ashamed to speak with her, and Don Emanuel de Cortez, her father-in-law, to see her.

And here, Christian Reader, let me request your curiosity to observe, and your piety to remark, how by degrees the indignation and justice of God fell upon this debauched young lady.

Two months were scarce expired since the murder of her husband, but having as it were drowned her senses in the ocean of her beastly lusts and pleasures, to her own shame, the grief of her mother, and the contempt and anger of her father-in-law De Cortez, she married Don Lewis de Andrada, one of her former favourites, a very proper gentleman in his person, but every way as debauched and vicious as herself, and therefore a fit husband for such a wife. That she was honest he knew the contrary; but hoping that her wealth would supply his wants, and repair the ruins of his decayed fortunes, was what induced him to become her husband.

But at last, when he saw her wealth come short of his expectation, and her lustful desires exceed it, he thought it high time to be wise, in not imitating the example of his predecessor Roderigo in his conduct towards her, therefore he held a strict hand over her, in a manner making her no better than a prisoner to her chamber; but her present affliction was but the shadow of what he intended her, for being resolute in his design of reforming her, he took from her all her best apparel, rings, and jewels, which the ladies of Spain, above all others, set the greatest value upon.

Dominica

Dominica was all in tears to find this alteration in her fortune and difference between her two husbands; and now, tho' too late, she saw Roderigo's love in Andrada's cruelty towards her; as she had been cruel to her first husband, therefore it was no wonder the second proved unkind to her; and indeed she was so very strict and severe with her, which enraged her to that degree, that she had certainly murdered him, as she had her other husband, if it had not pleased God to prevent it.

The fifty ducats which Denisa had received from her lady Dominica, having purchased a new apparel, had procured her a new sweet-heart, named Hugo, who under pretence of courting her for his wife, grew so familiar with her, that she had a great belly by him, and he, for fear of any danger or charge that might ensue from thence, as soon as he perceived it, left Granada without taking leave of her, which was a very great affliction to her, especially as she knew herself not able to maintain her child, nor her lady, in her present condition, able to give her any assistance; therefore she assumed this bloody resolution, that as she had been accessory in poisoning her master, now she would make away with her own child, as soon as it should be born: so being prompted hereto by shame and necessity, but chiefly by the devil; as soon therefore as she was brought to bed of a fine boy, she, like an execrable fury of hell, strangled it, the same evening; having wrapped it up in a clean linnen cloth, and tied a large stone to it, she carried it half a mile off to a pond, without the east gate of the city, where without any remorse she threw it in.

But after she had committed this inhuman fact, her strength failing her, instead of returning to her master's house, she went into the next inn, a poor little house, pretending to the host and hostess, that she had gotten hurt by a fall. But God did allow her small time to repose herself after murdering her innocent babe; for within an hour after a groom riding to water his horse in the same pond, his horse snuffled and started exceedingly, pawing in the water with his ^{right} fore foot, and many times thrusting down his head therein.

The groom gave him the spur and switch to bring him off, but in vain: for the horse the more pawed with his foot, and snuffled with his nose so long, that the packthread being broke, the white cloth appeared and floated upon the water; which the groom, upon the strange behaviour of his horse, but indeed by the immediate providence and pleasure of God, who then and there was pleased to make this brute beast an instrument in the detection of this cruel murder, caused to be fetched ashore, where opening it in the presence of some others, who flocked thither to the pond-side to see what it might be, they found a young infant boy, whose body was as white as the snow, with a chearful look, a cherry lip, and some blackness about his throat and neck, whereby they guessed it to be newly born, and strangled by some strumpet, his mother, whom to detect and find out, they searched all the adjacent houses, and at last found out Denisa in her inn; when the officers of justice, setting a midwife, and three or four elderly women to search her, they in spite of her resistance or

prayers, gave in evidence against her, that she was that day delivered of a child: then she was imprisoned, and the next day brought to her arraignment, where, threatened with the rack, she confessed the strangling of her child, and the throwing it into the pond; for which foul and inhuman fact of hers, she was the next day condemned to be hanged; when desirous to save her soul, though through the instigation of Satan, she had miserably cast away her body, she intreated that father Eustace, a priest of her acquaintance, might be sent her in prison to prepare her soul for the spiritual journey to heaven, who was accordingly sent her; and after a long and religious exhortation to her, falling on this point, That she would do well to disburthen her conscience of any capital crime, which in all the whole course of her life she might have committed; affirming, that the revealing thereof exceedingly tended to God's glory, and the felicity of her own soul.

The next morning she was brought to the place of execution, where a great number of people flocked together to see her end; after she had again confessed the strangling her infant, and the throwing it into the pond, she likewise owned herself guilty of being concerned in poisoning her master Roderigo, and related how it was effected by her lady Dominica and herself. The confession of this murder, perpetrated by this wretch and her mistress, astonished the auditors and judges, who, to be satisfied of the truth thereof, caused her to descend the ladder,

and to be confronted with her said lady Dominica, who, by this time in the midst of her security, was likewise apprehended, and brought before the criminal judges, where, contrary to her expectation, being enforced to understand the effect and tenour of her chamber-maid Denisa's confession and accusation against her for poisoning her husband Roderigo, she with much passion and choler termed her witch and devil, and cursed the hour that ever she fostered up so pestilent a viper in her house, to eat out her own heart and life: when with more confidence and boldness, than contrition and repentance, being first by the judges threatened with the torments of the rack, she confessed herself likewise to be guilty of murdering her first husband Roderigo. Then Denisa's sentence was altered, for she was condemned to be hanged for her first murder, and her dead body after to be burnt to ashes for her second; and the lady Dominica to be hanged for poisoning her husband: which news resounding through all the streets of Granada, almost all the people of that city flocked the next morning to the place of execution, to see this cruel mistress, and her bloody chamber-maid, take their last farewell of this world.

The chamber-maid was first turned off, who shewed great signs of a hearty repentance and sincere contrition for her sins: but little of this appeared in the lady Dominica, but much rage and reviling, so that her death answered to the foulness and enormity of her life, and could hardly draw any pity from the numerous spectators.

338A



Hist. XXIX.



GOD'S REVENGE

A G A I N S T

MURDER and ADULTERY.

H I S T O R Y XXIX.

A R G U M E N T.

Sanctifiore, upon Promise of Marriage, gets Urfina with Child, and afterwards casts her off, and marries Bertranna. Urfina being sensibly touched with this Disgrace, disguises herself in a Friar's Habit, and kills Sanctifiore as he is walking in the Fields; for which she is hanged.

WHEN the duke D'Offuna was Viceroy of Naples, there dwelt in that city two young ladies, named Urfina and Bertranna; the daughters of gentlemen nobly descended, and very rich. The first, Urfina, was past the twentieth year of her age; the other, Bertranna, entering her eighteenth. Urfina was tall and slender, Bertranna short and somewhat a-wry. Urfina was most handsome, but Bertranna had most wit. The first affable and courteous, the other proud and malicious.

Although these two rich young ladies had many admirers' yet none of them so passionately loved Urfina, as the baron of

Sanctifiore of Capua, a very rich young nobleman,; nor could Bertranna in her heart affect any other but the baron; neither was it possible for her father De Troes to persuade her to desire any other for her husband than him. Thus we see Sanctifiore was deeply in love with Urfina, and Bertranna as much in love with him.

Whilst Urfina was assured of Sanctifiore's love to her, Bertranna, by herself and her friends, made it her chief care to persuade him to forsake Urfina, and to love and marry herself; but she found more difficulty therein, than she expected. True it is, that altho' the baron de Sanctifiore did frequent her father Placedo's house,
and

and his daughter Urfina's company; yet considering with himself, that Bertranna honoured him with her constant love, he held himself in a manner bound sometimes to visit her although it was more to please her than himself; yet he bore himself so equally towards her that if she had no great cause to hope, yet she had none to despair of his love. But his passion was so fervent towards Urfina, that having entirely gained her good will, he sought the consent of her father, whom, though for some months he found to be averse to his desires yet upon his importunate intreaties, and his daughter Urfina's tears, he at last consented to their marriage, only delayed the consummation thereof, for some secret reasons best known to himself. Whilst thus the Baron de Sanctifiore remained in Naples, his long stay, prodigal expences there, and his absence from Capua, where his lands lay, made him be in want of money, and not knowing how to procure it, to support his reputation with his intended wife and father-in-law, it greatly perplex'd him: and at last saw himself reduced to such extremity, that he was forced to borrow of one nobleman and gentleman, to pay another; which he saw could not long endure, without calling his reputation in question: which to prevent, knowing signior Placedo to be a close fist'd old gentleman, who lov'd his gold far better than his God, and that if he offered to borrow any of him, he would absolutely refuse to lend it; and that it was very probable, that the prodigality of the one, and the covetousness of the other, might prove a great hindrance to his marriage; he therefore as a debauched wretch resolved to make sure work with the daughter, whom with a thousand amorous speeches, he

sought to draw to his lustful desires, without marriage. Urfina, though she loved Sanctifiore, yet valued her honour equal with her life, and wondered at his obscenity; therefore as a chaste woman, with tears she laid before him the consideration of his request, and how odious it would be both to God and man; how much beauty there was in virtue, and how little any sensual pleasure can make amends for the loss of innocence and reputation; and that for these reasons she was already to become his wife, but disdained the thoughts of being his strumpet.

The lascivious baron Sanctifiore seeing his lust thus strongly opposed by her religion and virtue, and being the more enflamed thereby, he redoubled the fury of his attack upon her. He followed her day and night with his importunities, vowing that what he asked proceeded wholly from his irresistible affection to her, and that he would be as ready to marry her after she had gratify'd his desires as he would now if her father had not deferr'd that happiness which he no longer could, with any patience wait for, and told her, as their loves would be known to none but themselves, she could have nothing to fear for her reputation, which should ever be as dear to him as to herself.

Happy had it been for this young lady, if she could have had firmness enough to have persevered in her first sentiments of virtue, but the strength of her lover's persuasions, and the weakness of her own resolution, betrayed her to a folly which afterwards she had great cause to repent.

Sanctifiore having deflowered his young and beautiful mistress, now so frequently wanton'd with her that he began to be satiated with her charms, and forgetting his promises,

promises, grew cool in his affection, and when she mentioned marriage to him, was either deaf or answered so ambiguously, that she could not but suspect his fidelity to her, and not without reason, for in less than three months he quite forsook her father's house, leaving her nothing to comfort her but her tears and growing waist.

Sanctifiore now went away to his second mistress Bertranna, whom, not for her beauty, but for her father's great wealth, and his own pressing wants, he seemed to love more eagerly than before, which was infinitely agreeable to the young lady, who had long loved him, and desired nothing more than to see him her husband; for that reason having always a very watchful eye upon his actions, and many spies to give her an account of his behaviour, she was advertised that there was some difference and falling out between him and Ursina, and also that being far from home, he wanted money to defray his expences in Naples, which she imagined might be the cause of the misunderstanding between them; for that perhaps he having attempted to borrow some money of the close-fisted Placedo, and met with a repulse, now shewed his resentment to the daughter. Although she had not exactly hit on the truth, yet the better to make an eternal breach between them, and consequently secure his affections to herself, she dealt so politically with her father de Torres, who she knew desired him as much for his son-in-law as she did for a husband, that she secretly prevailed upon him to lend Sanctifiore what money he might have occasion for; so old de Torres meeting him the next day in his house, and taking him aside into his study, he there told him, that in

regard to his being so far from Capua, his home, and his having tarried so long, and at so great an expence in Naples, it was very likely he might be short of cash, and therefore intreated him that he would be pleased to let him supply his immediate occasions with the sum of five hundred pounds, and if that was not sufficient, he was very ready to lend him a larger upon his own honour, adding, that if, as he had been informed, he had a design of paying his courtship to his daughter Bertranna, and it should ever come to be a match, there would be no need of repaying it, but that he should give her besides the fortune he had always proposed, and he would be sure of being the heir to his whole estate when he died.

This seasonable service was a very acceptable favour to Sanctifiore, and he returned de Torres many thanks for this great beneficence, and the honour he had done him in permitting him to lay himself at the young lady's feet. These compliments passed, Sanctifiore taking leave of the father with much joy found out his new mistress Bertranna, to whom he related all that had passed between her father and himself, highly extolling his generosity and polite behaviour, and expressed the greatest transports in being allowed by him to offer up to her his sincerest affections. The young lady, with a becoming modesty, answered him, that her inclinations ever were, and should be governed by her duty to her father, and with a blush upon her cheeks told him, that as in all things he had shewn himself an indulgent parent, so had he still maintained that character, in giving his consent to her receiving the addresses of so accomplished a cavalier.

Urfina saw, with inexpressible grief, how unkindly Sanctifiore used her, and how basely he had abused her in the points of honour and fidelity, yet her affection to him was as constant as ever; and so little was she acquainted with the nature and baseness of mankind, that considering what familiarity had past between them, she believed it would be impossible for him to be so cruel, as in the end not to marry her. She had likewise inform'd him, that she was with child by him, and when all other arguments failed, was in hopes this might prevail, reclaim his affection to her, and induce him to pity her, and compassionate her unborn babe: but to check all these hopes, his constant visits to Bertranna, and the kind reception he met with there, were not carried on with such secrecy, but that she had notice of them, which greatly disturbed her mind, and made her feel the bitter pangs of jealousy; and that she might no longer be in doubt, resolved if possible, to see Sanctifiore, and know her doom from his own lips. To this end she employed Nicholata, her father's coachman, whom she knew to be faithful, and giving him a ring off her finger, which Sanctifiore knew very well, she bade him go to his Lodgings, or where else he could find him, and deliver that to him as a token of her love, and to request him to let her see him that day at her father's house, having business of the greatest importance to communicate to him. Nicholata accordingly finding him out, delivered his young lady's present and message; and Sanctifiore returned him with this answer, that he would certainly wait upon her that afternoon. Urfina, overjoyed at this news, prepared to receive him with a heart filled by doubts

and fears, and the baron coming according to his promise, was conducted into her chamber, where she came up to meet him, having in her looks much love and tenderness, mixt with grief and despair.

Urfina, with tears in her eyes, complained of his lost affection; his long absence from her, and the violation of his vows, telling him of her pregnancy; therefore she hoped he would now speedily perform his solemn promise of marrying her, and name the day when he designed to put it in execution, for she was sure he had more honour and conscience than to forsake her in her present circumstances, nor, as the world reported, think of marrying such a one as Bertranna: the cruel-hearted baron, nettled at the reproaches, and glad of an opportunity of breaking with a mistress he was weary of, made no reply to the first part of her complaints, but to the two last gave her this thundering answer: "Know, Urfina, that I have used all possible means to procure the consent of my parents to marry you, but find they are utterly averse to it, and without their consent I will never marry any one. As for Bertranna, she is not so much your inferior in beauty, as she is your superior in virtue, therefore you may provide for your own fortune as you can, as I have already for mine."

Having spoke these words, with a look full of scorn, he threw the ring she had sent him to her, and rushed hastily out of the room, denouncing this shocking sentence at his departure, "That he would legitimate no bastard, nor be the husband to a whore."

Poor Urfina now began to look back on her former folly, and deeming her
lover

lover lost for ever, and herself consequently ruined, her sorrows were so infinite that she was ready to drown herself in her tears. The wicked baron triumphed in his cruelty, and posted away to acquaint Bertranna with the eternal breach there was now made between them, who as much rejoiced as the other grieved; but notwithstanding she was in this sorrowful condition, she knew it was high time to take some care of her reputation. She had as yet acquainted none but Sanctifiore with her disgrace; but though she would still conceal it, if possible, from all the world, yet she knew that she must be obliged to put her confidence in somebody for assistance, and thought no one so proper as an old aunt, named Dona Mellefanta, who being a prudent and rich widow that dwelt at Puzzolo, about ten miles from Naples; when inventing an excuse to her father, she told him that it was not unknown to him, how she had a long time been weak and sickly, that the air of Naples was neither wholesome nor pleasing to her; and because she had often dreamt she should in a little time recover her former health in Puzzolo, she therefore besought him that he would speedily send her thither, to live some small time with her aunt Mellefanta. Her father Signior Placedo, whose age, contentment, and joy, lived chiefly in the prosperity of this his only child and daughter, made her will and desire his own, when not knowing any thing of the bickering that had past between his daughter and the baron de Sanctifiore, or of his affection to the lady Bertranna, he asked her when she was at Puzzolo what would become of the baron? To whom she returned this answer; if Sanctifiore loves

me he will then leave Naples and visit me, or if he do not, I will not love him; which reply of her's pleased her father so well, that he caused her to get ready her apparel and baggage, and within three days after, sent her away in his coach, to his sister Mellefanta; where being arrived, she speedily and privately acquainted her aunt with the secret of her great belly, and also with all the circumstances thereof, and therefore prayed her best love and assistance to her herein, which she faithfully promised her; adding withal, that because she was of her own blood, she would regard and love her as her own child, telling her, that she highly commended her policy, for thus blinding the eyes of her father, and for leaving Naples to come to Puzzolo, that she might with the greater privacy be disburthened of her incumbrance; but could not help blaming her for the cause, in suffering herself to be abused and betrayed by so base a man as the baron de Sanctifiore; but then again excusing that error of her niece upon the freshness of her youth and beauty, she bade her fear nothing but to resolve to be chearful, and keep her spirits.

Here we see our beautiful Urfina safe under protection of her aunt Mellefanta, and far out of the sight of those who would have rejoiced in her disgrace, entertained at a splendid table, and wanting for no convenience of life; who therefore would believe but that she would abandon her sorrows, and cast off the base baron de Sanctifiore, who had so ungratefully treated her; but nothing in the world was capable of making her come to that resolution; for although she believed him to be entangled in the lures of Bertranna's beauty, and the temptations of her father de

Torres's

Torres's wealth, yet judging his heart and affections by her own, she still loved him so dearly, that she thought he could not hate her so deadly, as to reject and repudiate her, to marry Bertranna; when the more to fortify her belief and resolution thereof, she very often read over his former letters, and therein finding, that by his conscience and soul, and by heaven, and by God, he had bound himself to marry her, and to live and die her faithful husband; she then believed that no man, much less a nobleman, and least of all a Christian, would be so prophane and impious, to violate all these his great oaths and promises so solemnly made, and so religiously attested unto God; wherefore although this baron de Sanctifiore was absent from her, yet seeing him still present in her eyes and heart, she therefore, in consideration of his promises, did yet continually so plead for him against herself, and for his affection and fidelity to her against her suspicion and diffidence of him, that she yet flattered herself with a conceit, that in the end his conscience would so call home his thoughts, and God his conscience, that he would marry her, and none but her; upon the foundation of which reasons, she thought it a good way for her to seek to reclaim him by letter, and after long debating with herself in what terms she should write, she sent him the following:

URSINA to SANCTIFIORE.

“ **T**O preserve your honour, and prevent my own disgrace and shame,
 “ I have left Naples to sojourn here for a
 “ time in Puzzolo, with my aunt, where
 “ your presence will make me as truly
 “ joyful and happy, as I feel and know

“ myself infinitely miserable without it;
 “ for although of late, but for what cause
 “ or reason, God knows, I know not, it
 “ hath pleased you to exercise my patience in your discontent; yet in regard I am your wife by purchase, since you are my husband by promise, whereof the copies of your former letters will inform and remember you, that you made God the judge, and your soul and conscience the witnesses, I cannot believe that you are so irreligious, or that you bear me so little love, or so much malice, to make yourself guilty of such foul infidelity to me, and impiety towards God; and I appeal to them all, if my tender and untainted affection to you has not every way deserved the contrary at your hands. Again, as in hoping to marry you, I gave you my heart, so in assurance and confidence thereof, you did likewise bereave me of my honour; and therefore if the counterpart of that contract do any way fade or die in your memory, yet rest confident, that the original lives still in heaven, as the pledge and seal thereof doth now in my unhappy womb here on earth. Mistake me not, my dear Sanctifiore, for I write not this out of any malice, but out of true affection to you; to the end, you may thereby seriously consider, and religiously remember with yourself what I am to you, you to myself, and what the unfortunate innocent unborn babe is to us both.

“ And although I am your wife before God, yet I will now in all humility make myself your hand-maid, and with a world of sighs and tears, throw myself at your feet, and lower if I
 “ could

“ could, to conjure and beg you, by my
 “ poor beauty, which once you did so
 “ much admire and adore; by the me-
 “ mory of my lost virginity, which you
 “ wrested from me with so many amorous
 “ sighs and tears; by all your deep oaths
 “ and promises which you so religiously
 “ gave me to remain still loving to me;
 “ by your conscience and soul, yea, for
 “ your poor infant’s sake, and lastly, for
 “ God’s sake abandon your unjust dis-
 “ pleasure and innerited discontent con-
 “ ceived against me: and my dear Sanc-
 “ tifiore, come away to me to Puzzolo,
 “ and there make me your wife in the
 “ sight of his church and people, as I
 “ am already in that of heaven and his
 “ angels; I say again, come away to me
 “ my sweet Sanctifiore, for your sight
 “ will delight my heart, and your pre-
 “ sence and company ravish my soul
 “ with joy. It is impossible for Ber-
 “ tranna either to love or honour you
 “ the hundredth part so dearly as your
 “ Ursina doth, and till death, resolve to
 “ do; I will freely forget all your former
 “ discourtesies towards me, and attribute
 “ them more to her foolish vanity, than
 “ any way to your unkind disposition or
 “ inclination; yea, I will not knit my
 “ brows when you come to me, but will
 “ chearfully and joyfully prepare myself
 “ to meet you with my smiles, and ten-
 “ derest embraces: but if otherwise you
 “ will not hearken to me, or this my
 “ letter, or regard these my requests and
 “ sorrows, nor obey and follow God and
 “ your conscience herein, in speedily re-
 “ pairing to me, to make me your joy-
 “ ful wife; then will I notwithstanding
 “ still resolve to love you dearly, though
 “ you hate me deadly, and to pray for

“ you, though you curse me; yea, I will
 “ then leave you to God, and religiously
 “ beseech his divine Majesty, to be a
 “ just judge between us, of my firm af-
 “ fection and constancy to you, and of
 “ your cruel ingratitude and treachery to
 “ me. May you live as happy as
 “ your constant Ursina knows that with-
 “ out you she shall assuredly live sorrow-
 “ fully, and die miserably.

“ URSINA.”

Her messenger Nicolato arriving pri-
 vately at Naples, found the baron de Sanc-
 tifiore in his chamber by the fire, to
 whom he delivered this letter, who at
 first, knowing from whom it came, stood
 a pretty while musing and consulting with
 himself, whether he should read or burn
 it, but at last he breaking up the seals
 thereof, with much ado afforded himself
 the time and patience to peruse it, which,
 having done, although he no way me-
 rited to receive so sweet and loving a
 letter from Ursina; yet not blushing for
 shame, but looking pale with envy and
 malice thereat, he darting forth a dis-
 dainful frown, and tearing the letter in
 pieces, threw it into the fire; when turn-
 ing himself hastily towards Nicolato, who
 stood near him, and saw all that he had
 done, he in great choler spoke to him
 thus: “ Tell that proud and foolish wo-
 “ man, your mistress, Ursina, that I dis-
 “ dain her as much as she writes she loves
 “ me, and that, as now, so ever here-
 “ after I return no other answer to her
 “ and her letters, but contempt and si-
 “ lence;” and then to express his greater
 fury, Nicolata was no sooner out of his
 chamber, but he very hastily threw fast
 the door after him; and in this furious

and cholerick manner did this base Sanctifiore receive the love, and entertain the letter of our sweet and sorrowful Urfina.

Nicolato, as much grieving as admiring at this extravagant rage of Sanctifiore, presently left Naples, carried home this dismal news to his distressed lady Urfina, which he faithfully and punctually related to her, who expected a quite different answer to her long and fond letter. She stood for some time amazed, and like one thunderstruck at the recital of his inhuman and barbarous behaviour, but recovering herself a little, and resolving that her piety should exceed his cruelty, she bedewed the roses of her cheeks with many pearly tears, then pouring forth this ejaculation from the bottom of her heart, that it would please God to forgive him, and be merciful to herself, a great and wretched sinner. Would to God she had always continued in this religious mind and resolution! She now abandoned herself wholly to grief and sorrow, which soon bringing another misfortune upon her, she was forced to call in the aid of the midwife, who delivered her, not without great peril of her life, of a male child still born. Now though she wanted no careful attendance and comfort from her aunt, in this her sickness and extremity, yet she wept bitterly and pitifully and her aunt seeing her afflict herself so much, advised her to endeavour to forget the man whose baseness and ingratitude had been the death of her child within her.

While thus she remained very sick and weak in bed, yet still her heart and affection was constantly with Sanctifiore, notwithstanding all his base ingratitude and cruelty, and she resolved once more

to send to him; so calling Nicolato to her again, who was the only one she dare venture to trust with this great secret, and wanting strength to write, charged him to ride post to Naples to the baron Sanctifiore, and to tell him from her, that she was extremely ill, and not likely to live, that she was delivered of his and her son, who was dead born, and therefore she begged him, that for God's sake he would speedily come over to her, because for his good and her content she infinitely desired to discharge her mind and conscience to him before she went to heaven. So Nicolato, in discharge of his duty, and his lady's command, seemed rather to fly than post to Naples, where arriving at Sanctifiore's house, and finding him within, he sent him his name by one of his men, as also, that he most earnestly desired to speak a word with his lordship; but Sanctifiore knowing who it was, and therefore imagining from whom he came, bade his man carry him back this answer, That he would neither speak with him, nor see him. Nicolato was perplexed with this his short and sharp reply, but because his message was of great importance, as also for that he exceedingly respected his young lady and mistress, he resolved not to return to her as a fool; to which end, at the foot of the stairs, he enquired of another of his servants when he thought his lord would go out, who told him, he would take coach within half an hour, whereat Nicolato being exceedingly glad, he thought it best to stay for him in the street, where, with much vigilance and impatience, he attended his coming; so at last seeing him come out of his gate, Nicolato placed himself betwixt him and his coach, and with his hat in his hand very resolutely and
orderly

orderly delivered him his mistress's message at full, which Sanctifiore understanding, he at first smiled thereat, but then presently again entering into choler, he returned Nicolato this answer in his ear; "Tell that strumpet, your mistress, Ursina, from me, that I wish she were buried with her bastard, and that they were both with the devil."

Nicolato returning to Puzzolo gave notice of it to his young lady Ursina, who still kept her bed through melancholy and sickness, but at the news of her trusty servant's arrival, hoping he had brought some good news from her Sanctifiore, she bade her maid for a while to absent herself, and to send up the coachman Nicolato to her; and although in his sorrowful looks and countenance she might already tacitly read the bad news he brought her from Sanctifiore, yet she called him to her and bade him speak on; but alas! he spoke too soon for her, for with a trembling voice he told her the harsh entertainment which Sanctifiore gave to him, and his message in Naples, and the inhuman and cruel answer which he bade him return to her, without any way adding or diminishing a word; which as soon as she understood, she, for the extremity of her grief and sorrow, hung down her head, and crossing her arms uttered this passionate speech: "Good God! Is it possible that Sanctifiore will thus abuse me? or is this the favour which I must expect of him, in requital of those extraordinary courtesies he hath received from me?" When walking up and down her chamber, she thanked Nicolato, and giving him some gold for his pains, bade him leave her, and to send up her aunt Mellefanta, who coming to her, she

prayed her to shut the chamber-door, and then sit down by her bed-side, for that she had some secrets to reveal; when with a thousand sighs and tears, she acquainted her from point to point with what had now again passed between Sanctifiore and herself, in this second journey of Nicolato to him at Naples. Her aunt Mellefanta laughed as much at this folly of her niece Ursina, as she herself wept at her own sorrows and affliction; and having as much wit as the other had weakness, she made bold to call her fool, in caring so much for him, who contemned and scorned her; then advised her to have more courage and wit, and because the base baron Sanctifiore detested and defied her, to pay him in his own coin, and do the like with him. An accident now fell out, that shewed her he had quite thrown off all thoughts of her, for one of her father's servants arrived at Puzzolo, with the news that Sanctifiore was married to Bertranna, and to inform her it was the desire of his master for her to return home. Which Ursina no sooner hearing, but every member of her body trembled for meer grief and vexation; her sorrows were so great, that she could not speak a word, when being ready to fall to the ground, her aunt Mellefanta stepped to her assistance, with some of the servants, but they had all of them much ado to support her; when at last wringing her hands, and looking up stedfastly to heaven, she poured forth this bitter exclamation against Sanctifiore: "And hath this base man at last requited all my love with this monstrous ingratitude and treachery! O why do I live to suffer it! and O wherefore should he live for offering it to me?" Her aunt also was greatly enraged.

raged against him for his baseness, which added fuel to the flame of her niece's choler; but she needed not that, for this very last act of his marriage with *Bertranna*, set her all on fire and revenge against him, so that she never loved him so much as she now hated him. She was pleased much with the request of her father for her return to Naples, where, as soon as she arrived, she resolved and vowed that she would murder *Sanctifiore* herself, or cause him to be murdered by others. Her aunt *Melefanta*, by all soft means and persuasions, fought to pacify her discontent and fury, but she spoke to a woman that was deaf either to counsel, consolation, or reason, for her malice and revenge against *Sanctifiore* had so fully taken up her heart, and possessed her resolutions, that she neither resolved nor thought of any thing else, but how and in what manner she might murder him; to which end she took coach at *Puzzalio*, concealing her bloody intents and resolutions towards *Sanctifiore* from her aunt *Melefanta*, who she thanked most lovingly and courteously for all her care and affection to her, the remembrance whereof she said she would bear to her grave; so taking leave of her she returned to Naples to her father, who received her with much joy, and was very glad of the recovery of her health, but yet perceived some secret discontent lie lurking in the furrows of her brows; however she dissembled it both to him and the world, bearing herself fairly, modestly, and temperately towards him in her words and actions, who all this time had been ignorant of her pregnancy, as also of the birth and burial of her infant.

She was no sooner come to Naples, but her deadly malice and revenge to *Sanctifiore* would give no truce to her thoughts, nor peace to her resolutions, for her heart having conspired with the devil, and both of them against God, she now from the matter, fell to the manner, and from her consultation to the practice of the wickedness she intended. She first thought it best to get him poisoned; to which end, within ten days after her arrival at Naples, she sent for her own apothecary, named *Antonio Romancy*, and having sworn him to secrecy, proffered him two hundred ducatoons to poison her mortal enemy the baron de *Sanctifiore*; but *Romancy* was too honest a man, and too religious a christian to undertake it, and so utterly refused her, and her proffer; and there with many godly reasons and pious speeches, endeavoured to dissuade her from this foul and bloody fact; but he spoke to the wind, for she was resolute not to retire, but to advance in this her cruel and inhuman design, only she here again strongly conjured this honest apothecary to secrecy, which he solemnly promised.

Ursina was still implacable in her malice and revenge against *Sanctifiore*, which reviving with more violence, flamed forth with the greatest impetuosity. When she by her secret spies, was given to understand, that he triumphed in her affliction and scandal, and reputed it his chief content and felicity, to have erected the trophies of his joy upon the ruins of her honour and reputation; as also that she and this her disgrace was now become the publick laughter, and private scorn and glory of his proud and ambitious wife, *Bertranna*; so she could not endure the thought

thought, much less digest the remembrance thereof; and therefore speedily resolved to reduce her malicious contemplation into a bloody action towards him, and to try another experiment and conclusion thereof.

Having therefore formerly mis'd of her apothecary Romancy, to poison him, as her trusty coachman Nicolato, who, as we have before said, was both an eye and ear witness of his base and ignoble cruelty towards her, she sent for him, and with many ruthless looks and sorrowful sighs, having first commended and applauded his fidelity to her, and then sworn him to secrecy to what she should now relate and deliver to him: she told him, that she could not live except that base lord Sanctifiore was sent to another world, and therefore she proffered him an hundred Spanish double pistoles of gold, if he would either murder him by night in the street with his rapier, or shoot him in the fields the first time he met him. Nicolato was amazed at this bloody proposition of his young lady, whom he ever before thought to have been of a charitable and religious disposition; and as for his own part, although he was poor, yet he was honest, and would not defile his soul, or stain his hands with innocent blood for all the money she had power to offer.

So in humble, yet in positive terms, he refused to comply with her request, and with tears in his eyes endeavoured to persuade her from so cruel a purpose, affirming that the end of murder was always the beginning of shame, repentance, misery, and confusion to the authors of it, upon which she hung her head to see herself thus repulsed; but yet was so cautious and wary in her actions, that she

again made him swear secrecy to her in all things which now did or might concern this business; which he faithfully promised her, provided that her command and his service, was every way exempt from the effusion of innocent blood, and the perpetration of murder; to which he resolutely vowed to her, it was impossible for him ever to be seduced or drawn, and so taking leave of her, he left her alone; but yet as he was going away she again called him to her, and strictly charged him first carefully and curiously to inform himself, and then her, of Sanctifiore's most frequent haunts and walks without the city, which he likewise promised her to perform.

Our malicious and revengeful Ursina was not contented to receive the denial from her apothecary Romancy, and the repulse from her coachman Nicolato, about this deplorable business, but without making any good use of their honest and religious dissuasions from it, or without once looking up to God, or thinking of heaven or hell, she as a fatal member and profligate agent of Satan, was still resolute to proceed therein.

She now saw that she could not, with safety, employ any other herein but herself, and therefore day by day calling upon Nicolato to know of him, where Sanctifiore's usual haunts and walks were out of the city, he at last told her, that he was fully assured, that most mornings and evenings, he took his coach, and sometimes his page, but many times went alone, a mile out of the city, and there in a grove of olives and orange trees, near the side of a small river, he with his book in his hand, and his spaniel dog at his heels, passed an hour or two alone, his coach

being sometimes out of his sight, and sometimes returned to the city, and so came and fetched him back again; which report was no sooner heard by Urfina, but she received it with much joy, and was therefore so cruel in her thoughts, and so determinate and bloody in her resolutions, that she would protract no time, but speedily bethought herself of a hellish stratagem and policy, no less strange than cruel, which the devil himself suggested, and found out for her, to wreak her inveterate malice and infernal revenge in murdering of Sanctifiore; the manner whereof was thus:

She very secretly provided herself with a friar's compleat habit, as a russet-gown and cowl, with a girdle of a knotty rope, and wooden sandals, proper to the order of the Bonnes Homes, which is the reformed one of that St. Francis, with a false negligent old beard, and hair for the head suitable to the same, and in one of the pockets of his frock, she put a small begging-box, such as those friars use to carry in city and country, when they crave the charitable alms and devotion of well-disposed people; as also a new breviary, or small mass-book, bound up in blue Turkey leather richly gilt: but in the other pocket thereof, she put a couple of small pistols which she had secretly purloined out of her father Placedo's armoury, and had charged each of them with a brace of bullets, fast rammed down, with priming powder in the pans; and all these fatal trinkets, she, with equal silence and treachery, tied up close in the gown, expecting the time and hour to work this her cruel and lamentable feat on Sanctifiore, who little dreamt what a bloody banquet his old love, and now his

new enemy Urfina, was preparing for him.

It was on the Tuesday after Palm Sunday, a time and week, which the blessed passion of our Saviour Jesus Christ makes sacred and famous, and which, all true Christians, in his commemoration ought to keep holy, and not to pollute and defile it with barbarous and bloody sacrifices, when our masculine monster, rather our female fury, Urfina, for such was she now grown, being assured by Nicolato, that the baron de Sanctifiore was that day about three o'clock after dinner gone out alone in his coach to the aforesaid place of walking, a mile off the city in the fields, she, infinitely glad of this longed for opportunity, bade Nicolato make ready his coach, and silently leave it at the postern gate of her father's garden, and presently to come up to her chamber to her, which he as soon performed, to whom she now, prophanely and treacherously, said, "Nicolato, by the favour and mercy of God, I have exchanged my cruelty into courtesy, towards the baron de Sanctifiore, and do therefore presently resolve to give him a merry-meeting in the fields, whereat before our departure and return, I know you will rejoice," which indeed was very welcome and pleasing news to Nicolato, to whom she then gave her little bundle, and so purposely leaving her waiting-maid behind her, she chearfully and speedily followed him to the coach, and bade him drive away to find out Sanctifiore, which he did. Being come within a stone's throw or two of him, Urfina bade Nicolato stop, and drive his coach into some close shady place out of the highway, where she might see Sanctifiore without being seen by him.

Then

Then getting out of her coach, and putting on her disguise, she ordered Nicolato the coachman to come up to her when she waved her white handkerchief, and thus, with chearfulness in her looks, though with rancour in her heart, she went towards Sanctifiore, who was there walking alone and reading. The counterfeit friar Urfina approaching him, and holding out her begging-box, prayed him for the blessed Virgin Mary's sake, and also for holy St. Francis's sake, to bestow something on their society and order, which Sanctifiore resolved to do: but first seeing the fine breviary in her hand, desired to look upon it, which was the very thing Urfina aimed at when she purchased that shewy book: so while he was carefully perusing it, she stepped behind him, and very softly drawing out her pistol, which was already cocked, she let fly at the reins of his back; upon which he falling down on the ground, to make sure work, the devil and her own malice giving her strength, she drew his rapier from his side, and stabbed him in the breast; but before he quite expired, she pulled off her false beard, and discovering herself to him as he was dying, spurned him most disdainfully with her foot, and gave him this cruel farewell; "That such a death such villains deserved who triumphed in the ruins of innocence and virtue."

This bloody part thus acted, Urfina waved her handkerchief to her coachman, who coming up to her with the coach, was much amazed to behold the sad spectacle of baron de Sanctifiore's dead body; but his lady, with a graceless and insulting bravery, cried out, "Rejoice with me, Nicolato, that I have so nobly reveng-

ed myself on the ungrateful and perfidious baron de Sanctifiore;" but honest Nicolato, who was as full of true sorrow, as she was of false joy, replied, "O madam! what have you done? This is no cause and no time to rejoice in, and not to dissemble with you, as you in your fatal friar's frolick did with me, I doubt this bloody act will prove your ruin and confusion." Having spoke these words he speedily took her up in the coach, and drove full gallop to the thicket from whence he last came, where she cast off her friar's weeds, which with her beard, box, books, and pistols, they threw into a deep place from a precipice, and then drove with more haste than good speed towards Naples; for Nicolato driving the coach in a narrow way by the side of a hill, it so happened that one of the horses making a false step fell over the bank, and drew the other horse and coach after him, whereby Urfina broke her right arm, and the coachman his left leg.

Whilst Urfina, and her lame and sorrowful coachman, were sitting down on the bare ground, able only to pity but not to help one another, by God's providence it came to pass, that the baron de Sanctifiore's coach came rattling on the bank above them, and it was his page Hieronymo, who was going to fetch home his lord, but seeing the misfortune that had happened to the young lady whom he knew perfectly well, he went down the hill to offer any help that was in his power, and as her own coach was broke to pieces, proffered his lord's to carry her home to her father signor Placedo's house in the city, little dreaming that she came from murdering his kind lord and master Sanctifiore,

tiore, and that his breathless body then lay exposed in the open field to the birds of the air.

Nicolato was much perplexed, but his lady much more, at this unexpected encounter and ominous meeting with Sancti-fiore's equipage, she knew not how to behave, or whether she should accept or refuse the offer that was made her, but at length found herself constrained to accept it, there being no other conveyance to be had to carry her and her lame coachman home. When they arrived at Naples, they found that Signior Placedo was gone out to sup with the prince of Salerno, who, by the mother's side, was his cousin German, so there Urfina, setting a good face on her bad heart, gave the page many thanks for his courtesy, and likewise three ducatoons to the coachman, who taking leave of her, drove away with the coach to fetch home their master. Urfina's fears growing strong upon her, she speedily resolved to provide for her safety by flying to Puzzolo to her aunt Mellefanta; but we shall soon see how the Divine Providence prevented her.

The page Hieronymo being exceeding sorrowful for the young lady Urfina's misfortune, was yet well pleased that he had the good fortune to render her this piece of service; but what different passions reigned in his breast, when he came into the field where his dead lord lay, and saw him weltering in his gore! both he and the coachman being in the utmost astonishment at this lamentable spectacle, stood for some time quite unable to know what to think or say; but at last the sorrowful page determined to stay and weep by the breathless body of his master, while the coachman posted away to Naples to

acquaint the lady Bertranna, and her father Signior de Torres, with the woeful news; whereat she, almost drown'd in tears, and he greatly lamenting, both went into the coach in all haste and drove to the field, where the sight of her murdered lord almost distracted her. Perceiving none in sight of them, they could not imagine how this deplorable accident happened. Signior de Torres, leaving his daughter to bedew and wash her dead husband's cheeks with her tears, returned to Naples, and when he had found the officers of justice, he brought them back with him to be eye-witnesses of the unhappy fate of his son-in-law, and that they might take some order to enquire after the murderer. The officers immediately ordered the coachman to spread his cloak upon the ground, and to remove the dead body out of his blood upon it; then causing a surgeon, whom they had purposely brought with them, to undress it and search for the wounds, they found two, one by a pistol shot in his back, the other by a rapier in his breast. They likewise sought for his purse, which missing, they all confidently believed that he had been robbed and murdered by thieves: upon which the officers presently ordered every part adjacent to be searched, and whoever could be found to be brought before them; but no one was to be met with but a poor ragged boy of about twelve or fourteen years of age, him they brought along, who seeing the dead body quaked and trembled with fear.

These grave officers, seeing the boy bashful and timorous, bade him be of good courage, and nothing should hurt him if he was innocent, for which he thanked them with his cap and knee. Then they demanded

demanded of him if he saw any body come near that gentleman and kill him? to which in plain and rustick terms he answered, that from within the hedge where he kept his father's cows, he saw this gentleman walking near an hour by himself, with a book in his hand; and that then an old Friar came up to him, who, as he thought, begged alms of him, but immediately after he saw him shoot him, and the gentleman fall on the ground. Then they asked him, if he saw what became of the Friar? who told them, that a coach came up instantly and carried him away: upon which they demanded of him why he did not cry out when he saw the gentleman murdered; but he said he was afraid, lest he should kill him too. Thereupon they thought fit again to demand of him how many horses this coach had, and of what colour they were? to whom he affirmed, that they were black. Then the officers to conclude their enquiry, asked him what coloured cloak the coachman wore? who told them he had on a red cloak, with white lace.

Immediately upon this, Hieronymo the page related to Bertranna, and her father de Torres, in what manner he found the lady Urfina overturned in the road with her coachman, who he said had on a red cloak with white lace, and that they being both very much hurt, he had lent them the assistance of his lord's coach to carry them home to Signior Placedo's in Naples, but said that he saw no Friar; all this relation was likewise confirmed by the baron de Sanctifiore's own coachman: upon which the lady Bertranna, in the instant, cried out, as if inspired by God, that Urfina herself was that devilish Friar, who had murdered her lord and

husband. Then throwing herself on her knees, she earnestly begged for justice, which the officers told her she might be assured of; then left her and her father, with the page and coachman, to convey the dead body to Naples. The officers going thither before, sent their servants to Placedo's house to apprehend his daughter and the coachman Nicolato, whom they came time enough to stop in their intended journey to Puzzolo.

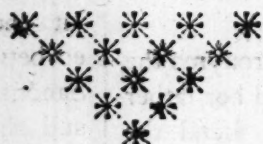
Urfina and the coachman being brought before the tribunal of the judges, were there accused of the murder, when both stoutly denying it, the little boy, Bartholomeo, was brought into court, to give evidence face to face against them, who there maintained before the judges all that he had said before, but said he could not think that young lady was the Friar, nor could he be positive as to the person of the coachman; but when his cloak was shewn him, he owned it very like what he had before made mention of.

Bertranna now also letting the judges into the private passages that had happened between Urfina and her late husband Sanctifiore, as his getting her with child, and then refusing to marry her, they were half convinced that it was her discontent which drew her to this piece of revenge, and believed that Nicolato the coachman might have been bribed to be accessory with her. Whereupon the next day they began with him, adjudging him to the rack; the torments whereof he endured with a wonderful fortitude and patience; so that remembering his oath of secrecy to his lady Urfina, he could not thereby be drawn to confess any thing, but denied all, whereof she having secret notice did not a little rejoice. Now

the very next morning Urfina herself was likewise adjudged to the rack, the wrenches and torments whereof, as soon as she sensibly felt, God proved then so propitious and merciful to her soul, that her delicate body and tender limbs could not possibly endure or suffer them; but then and there she to her judges and tormentors confessed herself to be the sole author and actor of the murder of the baron de Sanctifiore; but in her heart and soul she strongly affirmed to them, that her coachman Nicolato was not accessory with her therein; upon which apparent and palpable confession of her's, her judges acquitted Nicolato, and in ho-

nour to sacred justice, and for expiation of this her foul crime, pronounced sentence of death against her, That she should the next morning be hanged at the common place of execution, which, notwithstanding all the power and tears of her father and kinsfolks to the contrary, was accordingly performed, when she made her exit with many signs of sincere repentance.

Thus lived and died the unkind baron de Sanctifiore, and the revengeful lady Urfina: May God of his infinite mercy teach all who read this history to hate the levity of the one, and abhor the cruelty of the other.



354A



Hist. XXX.

GOD'S REVENGE

AGAINST

MURDER and ADULTERY.

HISTORY XXX.

ARGUMENT.

De Mora kills Palura treacherously in a Duel with two Pistols. His Lady Bellinda, with the Aid of her Gentleman-Usher Ferallo, poisons her Husband De Mora, and afterwards marries Ferallo, whom she murders in his Bed, for which she is burnt alive.

IN the kingdom of Portugal, within a league of the city of Estremoz, there dwelt a gentleman, named Alonfo de Mora, about fifty years of age, descended of a noble family, and although very rich in lands and other possessions, had spent the greatest part of his time in the wars in Africa and Flanders, under king Philip the Third. But had now wholly retired from the pursuits of fame and ambition, and lived at his seat in the country, near Estremoz aforesaid. He was a bachelor, and seemed to have taken a vow of celibacy, for he never

fought after a wife, but chose rather to shun the company of all women; but it so happened, that having been one day hunting, and having lost his servants, and the dogs, he went into a pleasant shady grove to walk, where he had not been long before an aged country gentleman came into the same place with a young lady, of about twenty years of age, of exquisite beauty, and richly dressed, to take the air; when they passed by de Mora, the old gentleman knowing him by sight, saluted him by his name, and the young lady making him a low courtesy, he

he was greatly surprized by the salutation of the first, but much more by the matchless beauty of the latter; therefore returning the compliment, he begged to know their names; upon which the gentleman told him, he was called Emanuel Curforo, and that the young lady with him was his daughter, that they were about a league from their own house, being come out to take the air, and that their coach was at the entrance of the grove.

De Mora having acquainted them likewise with the reason of his being there, took some turns with them, every now and then stealing a glance on the lovely features of the fair Bellinda. During which Curforo made De Mora an offer of his coach, but at that instant De Mora's servants and hounds came within view, who to make amends for their having strayed so long from their lord, presented him with a brace of hares, and a wild white fawn which they had killed; these he made an offer of to Curforo and his daughter, but they begging to be excused, he told them, that if they would do him the honour to accept of them, and his company, he would wait upon them the next day to eat part of them; upon which condition Curforo very thankfully received the present. So De Mora leading the young lady to her coach, could not help squeezing her by the hand as he went along, and whispering in her ear how much he was a slave to her beauty.

Thus in a little time we see an extraordinary alteration in De Mora; but whether more strange or sudden I know not, for in the morning he went out a free man, and now before night came home a slave and captive. Heretofore he spurned at love, and disdained beauty,

and now the very first sight of our fair Bellinda, set fire to his heart, so that his old blood was passionately and amorously inflamed with this new beauty, yea, the consideration of her sweet youth, and the remembrance of her fresh and delicate beauty, did, in his conceit, seem to make his age grow young, and to give the lie to those white hairs, which time had snowed upon his head and beard. A thousand times he repented himself of his former error and crime in living so long single, and was now assured and confident that there was now no earthly pleasure, or heavenly delight, comparable to the heart-ravishing kisses and embraces of his sweet Bellinda: but he thought not of the great disparity betwixt his declining age, and her fragrant and flourishing youth; nor what an unequal difference and disproportion there was between his fifty years and her twenty. However to make himself appear as near it as possible, he provided himself with every thing belonging to his dress, more suitable to a boy, than becoming the required gravity of fifty: and so to perform his promise to Curforo, took coach the next morning, and rode over to him, but not so much to taste his good cheer, as to feast his enamoured eyes on the delicious rarities and dainties of his daughter Bellinda's beauty. Dinner being ended, he acquainted Curforo with his affection to his daughter Bellinda, and his suit to seek and obtain her for a wife. Curforo wondered that so great a lord should descend so low as to seek his daughter in marriage. But finding De Mora in earnest, and understanding that he was deeply and passionately enamoured of her youth and beauty, he therefore thanked him for the undeserved honour,

honour, and gave him all hope and assurance, that he should shortly obtain and enjoy her for his wife. De Mora having thus won the affection and consent of the father, now sought that of the daughter, and taking her apart in the parlour, he there acted the part of a young orator and lover, proposing himself for her husband; but Bellinda more considering De Mora's age than the greatness of his nobility or estate, bit her lips, and hung her head at this motion, nay, seemed to be as averse, as he was forward in his pursuit.

Her father having laid his commands on her to embrace this match and no other, conjured her to confirm, and not to cast away her good fortunes in not marrying this great nobleman, vowing that he would for ever renounce her for his daughter if she disobeyed him therein: so he conducted her into the arbour of his garden, and there freely and courteously again gave De Mora the opportunity and benefit of speaking to her, but Bellinda was as much perplexed in mind, as they were obstinate in their motion towards her; when composing her countenance rather to sorrow than joy, she made a modest excuse to her father, but gave no absolute or peremptory denial to De Mora, yet fairly and discreetly craved of them both a month's time to resolve on this great business, which, she said, so much imported her happiness or misery; which request, her father and De Mora, finding full of discretion and reason, they severally granted it her; but in the interim De Mora not only frequently visited her in person, but made her many rich presents.

But before I proceed in this history, I must reveal a secret of no small importance

to the reader, which is, that our Bellinda was not so chaste as fair, or as might be expected from the virtuous example of her mother, who being dead, and her father giving her too much liberty, and too little good counsel, she for two whole years had been in love with a poor, yet very proper and resolute young gentleman, of about twenty five years of age, Don Fernando Palura, who being deeply enamoured of her, had lain so close, so constant, and so strong a siege to her chastity, that not to conceal the truth, first unknown to her father, then to Mora, and next to all the world, he had despoiled her of her virtue, and under colour of marriage, had very often taken his lustful pleasures with her; but his estate being very small, and her belly not growing great, she was not yet fully resolved, but therefore still delayed to marry him. True it is, that her father Curforo was formerly acquainted with Palura's affection and desire to marry his daughter; but as heretofore his poverty had made him reject him for his son-in-law, so now the consideration of De Mora's great wealth and nobility, caused him to disdain him, and commanded his daughter likewise to do the same. But she not considering that, and loving Palura's youth, as much as she hated De Mora's age, she was nevertheless so inconstant by nature, and so proud and ambitious by sex, that she could almost find in her heart rather to be a rich lady, than a poor gentlewoman, and so to leave Palura and marry De Mora. But first her crime and conscience made her send for Palura, and seriously to consider and debate hereon with him, which they did. Now Palura perceiving by Bellinda's looks and observing by her speeches, that De

Mora's wealth was far more powerful with her than his poverty ; and that she notwithstanding still aimed to keep him for her husband, and himself for her friend, he at last told her, that he would consent and content himself, that she should marry Don Alonso de Mora, conditionally that she would faithfully promise to grant him three requests : First, That he should have the same connections with her as heretofore : Secondly, That from time to time she should bestow some competency of De Mora's wealth on him, to support his weak estate and poverty : And Thirdly, That if De Mora died before him, that within three months after his death, she should then marry him. Which three unjust demands, and ungodly conditions of Palura's, his amorous Bellinda, betwixt sighs and smiles, immediately granted, sealing them with many oaths, and to add more prophaneness to their contract, they fell to the ground on their knees, invoking God and his angels for witnesses to it.

By this time was Bellinda's month expired, which she gave her father and De Mora for her resolution of marriage ; when both of them repaired to her, to understand and receive it : but her pride and ambition, having far more prepared and disposed her tongue than affection, she, as if she were a pure virgin, yea a Dianna for chastity, making a low reverence to her father, and a respectful courtesy to De Mora, delivered her resolution up in these terms ; That in humble obedience to her father, and true affection and zeal to Don Alonso De Mora, God had now disposed her heart and mind, that she was resolved to wait on his commands, and to be his hand-maid and wife, whenever he should please to make himself her lord and husband. This answer of Bel-

linda was so pleasing to her father, and so sweet and delicious to De Mora, that in acceptance of her love, and in requital of her consent, he gave her many kisses, and at the same time many and valuable presents, and within eight days after in great pomp and state married her ; whereat her kinsfolks and friends, and all the nobility and gentry of these parts did very much admire and wonder, some condemning his folly in marrying beneath himself, others admiring her good fortune in marrying so much above her.

Now within less than two months after their marriage, De Mora seeing that he was not capable to deserve or satisfy his wife's inclination, and also observing that she began to slight and disrespect him, and yet was very pleasant and good-humoured with other young gentlemen who frequented his house, he grew exceeding jealous, especially of Palura, whom he found oftener there than any other. This made him now begin to restrain her of her liberty, and to treat her more like his prisoner than his wife, setting many watchful spies over all her actions. Bellinda took this ill treatment of her husband's very unkindly, outwardly shewing many signs of grief and sorrow, and inwardly vowing to be revenged.

De Mora's jealousy was now grown to such a height, that whenever Palura came to his house, he was listening about in every corner in hopes of being convinced of that, which when known would still make him more miserable. The young couple, however, carried matters so secretly that he could not detect them in that, which indeed they too often committed, but he was as firm in the belief of it, as if he had, and absenting himself

self one night from her bed, he called her the next morning into his garden, where, with lightning in his looks, and thunder in his voice, he positively charged her with adultery with Palura, which she with as much impiety as falsehood, boldly denied upon oath, prophanelly calling upon heaven to witness her innocence and virtue, which not at all satisfying her husband, he charged her for the future not to dare to admit Palura into his house or her company. Hereat Bellinda hoping to give her husband some content by her own uneasiness, made a great shew of sorrow, and exterior grief; and sending for her father Curforo, acquainted him with the pretended unjust wrong and indignity which her lord and husband had offered her, and prayed him to interpose his authority and judgment to procure a reconciliation between them, which he very willingly undertook, but found it a task beyond his power to perform, so perverse and obstinate was De Mora in his suspicions; then having done his utmost, he prayed for them both, leaving their difference to be made up by God and time.

Bellinda in the mean while, who suffered doubly both in her pleasure and her reputation, was not so devoid of sense, but that she was willing speedily to take some method to provide for both. In the first place, seeming sorrowfully obedient to her husband, she thought it not proper for Palura to come near her for a time, wherefore, by a confident messenger, she sent him the following letter:

BELLINDA to PALURA.

"MY husband being confident that
" I love you far better than him-
" self: wherein as he is nothing deceived,

" so I conjure you by the preservation of
" your fidelity and honour, to forbear
" my house and fight for about two
" months, in which interim I will use
" my chief art, and the utmost of my
" possible power to calm the storms and
" tempests that jealousy hath raised in
" him; then be but as patient as I will be
" constant, and I hope a little time shall
" end our languishing, and again work
" our contents and desires; for though
" you are absent from me, yet I am still
" present with you, and although my
" husband De Mora hath my person, yet
" Palura, and none but Palura, hath my
" heart.

" BELLINDA."

Although Palura fetched many deep sighs at the reading this letter, yet he gave it many sweet kisses for her sweet sake, who wrote and sent it him; he knew not whether he had most reason to condemn De Mora's jealousy; or to commend his lady Bellinda's affection and constancy to himself; and because he resolved to prefer her content and honour equally with his own life; therefore he dispensed with his lustful and lascivious pleasures for a time, purposely to give her beauty and merits their due for ever: so in requital of her affectionate letter, he, by her own messenger returned her this kind and courteous answer:

PALURA to BELLINDA.

" I AM as sorrowful that your husband
" De Mora has discovered our affec-
" tions, as truly joyful that you love me
" far better than himself; wherefore to
" prevent his jealousy, and equally to
" preserve my fidelity with your honour,
" and your honour with my life, know,
" sweet

" sweet and dear Bellinda, that your re-
 " quests are my commands, and your
 " will shall eternally be my law, in which
 " regard I will refrain your house all
 " your long prefixed time, and so for-
 " bear to see you, but never to love
 " you, because your sweet and divine
 " beauty is so deeply engraven in my
 " thoughts, and imprinted in my soul,
 " that the farther I transport my body
 " from you, the nearer my affections
 " brings my heart to you. I will add my
 " chief wishes to your best art, that a
 " little time may work our content and
 " desires. But because there is no tor-
 " ment nor death so languishing as that
 " of disappointed love, therefore I shall
 " think every moment a month, and
 " every hour a year, before we again
 " kiss and embrace; conceal this letter of
 " mine from all the world, with as
 " much care and secrecy, as I send
 " it you with fervent zeal and tender
 " affection.

" PALURA."

The perusal of this letter, and the af-
 fection of Palura demonstrated thereby,
 made Bellinda as glad as the jealousy of
 her lord and husband De Mora made her
 sorrowful, and now seeing his rage be-
 yond all reason, and his malice and obsti-
 nacy quite implacable towards her, she
 abandoned her sighs and tears, resolving
 to make trial of a contrary experiment;
 so under a female face she assumed a mas-
 culine courage and resolution, slighting
 him and his jealousy, as much as he did
 her levity, and bearing herself more
 highly and imperiously towards him than
 ever she did before. But this behaviour
 of Bellinda produced not that good effect

which she expected from her husband, for
 he attributing this pride to proceed from
 some bad counsel given her by her minion
 Palura, it did but the more enflame his
 jealousy and exasperate his rage against
 them both.

Whilst Bellinda stood upon these terms
 with her husband De Mora, his brains,
 like so many wheels and spheres, were
 incessantly rolling about the orb of jea-
 lousy, to find out the mystery of this las-
 civious league between his wife and Pa-
 lura, in the conduct whereof he was as
 secret, as she was simple and inconsiderate.
 His policy was to find out any letter or let-
 ters of Palura to her, and her closet and
 casket were the only places, as he sup-
 posed for her to hide and conceal them.
 So on a Monday morning as his lady Bel-
 linda was gone to the parish church to
 hear mass, he purposely staid at home to
 effect this his secret intent and purpose,
 and then very privately entered her
 chamber, and his jealousy made him so
 industrious in the smith's trade as to open
 every lock: but he first resolved to try and
 open that of her closet, which when he
 was on the very point to do, casting aside
 his eye, he saw the tawny damask gown
 which his wife wore the day before,
 wherefore he flew to that to search and
 rifle the pockets for her keys. Now
 Bellinda's haste and devotion to the
 church was so great, that both she and her
 maid had forgotten the keys of her closet
 and cabinet, and left them in one of the
 pockets of her said gown, where her hus-
 band De Mora found them; whereat
 being exceeding joyful, clapping up his
 hooks and instruments, and, with equal
 jealousy and haste, opened first the closet,
 and then her cabinet, wherein leaving
 nothing

nothing unsearched, he at last found the very same letter of Palura to his wife Bellinda, which we have before mentioned. He read it over again and again, but for that which said, "I shall think every moment a month, and every hour a year, before we again meet, kiss, and embrace;" this line I say, his extreme jealousy made him to read over, at least as often as it had syllables, for this letter, and this branch of the letter, confirmed his jealousy, and now made him fully assured and confident, that his wife and Palura had defiled his honour, and his bed, by committing adultery together; when vowing a sharp and speedy revenge, he, with a panting heart, and trembling hand, lockt her closet and chamber-door, having left the keys again in the pocket of his lady's gown, and so went down into the hall among the servants, as if he were happy in knowing that of which he had much better have been ignorant.

By this time his wife, the lady Bellinda, returned from church; and after dinner ended, as soon as she betook herself to walk in the garden, according to her custom, her husband De Mora was so nettled with jealousy, and stung to the heart with revenge, that going up to his armoury, he took down an excellent sword and a case of pocket-pistols, each whereof he charged with two bullets, and calling for Emanuel de Ferullo, his lady's gentleman usher, he bid him cause two of his best saddle horses speedily to be made ready, and to accompany him to the town of Arraialios.

Within half an hour after the lady Bellinda returned from the garden, and hearing of their sudden departure, knew not what to say or think, nor whither they were gone, or about what business, not

the least conceiving so much as a thought that her husband De Mora had found her gallant Palura's letter, much less that he had any malicious or desperate attempt, so suddenly to put in execution against him on her account.

When De Mora was come near to Arraiallos, waiting in a green meadow, he sent his man Ferullo, to intreat Palura to take his horse and come speedily thither, he having something of great importance to speak to him about.

Ferullo, knowing nothing of his lord's intentions, found out Palura, and in very respectful terms delivered him his message: Palura no sooner heard it, but his guilty conscience flying in his face, and much suspecting De Mora's business with him, in very great confusion, he told Ferullo he would make ready to go with him to his master, which he did without taking any servant of his own with him, when coming into the meadow where De Mora on horseback impatiently expected him, some salutations passed between them, which Palura observed in De Mora to be more short than ceremonious. De Mora then called his man Ferullo to him and bade him ride to some distance, and not to stir, or come near them, whatever he might see pass between Palura and himself, which Ferullo obeyed, but wondered greatly at their business.

Here De Mora very passionately charged Palura with abusing and dishonouring him, by committing adultery with his wife, which Palura retorted upon him as a scandal and false aspersions both on his virtuous lady and himself; but De Mora, to make good his charge, shewed him his own letter, and with much vehemence asked him if he dare deny his own hand.

Palura was amazed at the sight of this letter, and could not forbear blushing when it was shewn him, not knowing what to think of it; but would not be so ungrateful to his kind mistress Bellinda, as to suppose that she had betrayed him, by delivering it up to her husband, but rather that he had surreptitiously obtained it from her; therefore he vainly attempted still to clear her reputation and his own innocence, by swearing that letter to be none of his, but written by some treacherous enemy to injure his honour, and basely abuse the reputation of the lady; but this feigned and palliating excuse could not pass current with the jealousy of De Mora, nor stop his revenge, who bid Palura give over such idle talk and prepare for his defence, for nothing but death should put an end to their quarrel; therefore drawing his sword he bid Palura do the like, who highly disdainig to have his youth and courage outbraved by this cruel cavalier, began the combat; the event of which was, that in two several encounters Palura had received no wound, but given De Mora two, one in his neck, and the other in his left arm, which occasioned so great an effusion of blood, that he began to grow faint and to despair of the victory by his sword; having agreed to separate a little to breathe, Palura's horse turning round, De Mora took advantage of that accident, and quickly drawing a pistol out of his pocket, shot him through the head, upon which he fell dead to the ground, without having a moment's time to say, "Lord have mercy on his soul."

De Mora, seeing Palura dead, and having more reason outwardly to rejoice in his victory, than inwardly to be satis-

fied with the manner of it, waved his handkerchief to his man Ferallo to come up, who had been an eye witness of what had passed. Go, said De Mora, and acquaint Palura's servants that I have slain their master in a duel, then ride home and tell my wife that I have sent her paramour to the other world. When you have delivered these messages follow me to Lisbon, whither I am going; so giving him some money for his journey, he took leave of him, and hastened away to the next town, where he got his wounds dressed, which proved not at all dangerous.

Ferallo, according to his lord's order, informed Palura's servants of their master's death, but not of the treacherous manner in which he fell. The domestics greatly grieving for his misfortune, fetched home the corpse, and his friends prepared for its decent interment, while Ferallo returned to his lady Bellinda, to whom he related all that had happened, and the message which his lord had sent to her. The lady almost drowned in tears at this account of the death of her dear Palura, whom she loved more than her own life, shut herself up in her chamber, and, for many days, would admit of no company or consolation whatsoever; and considering how deeply the misfortune of this disaster would reflect on her honour and reputation, therefore she vowed to requite Palura's death severely, and to revenge it sharply on the life of her husband De Mora, when she should be so happy, or rather so miserable, to see him return to her from Lisbon. She wondered at his secret malice, and sudden resolution against Palura, and more at the cause thereof, and from what point of the compass this
 furious

furious wind should proceed; when at last, having nothing else capable to comfort her, or to give truce to her tears but the sight of Palura's aforesaid letter, which in tender affection to him she had so often perused and kissed; she passionately went to her closet, and with affection and sorrow to the cabinet, to feast her eyes with the sight, and to comfort her heart with the perusal thereof; when, contrary to her expectation, she found the letter taken away, her papers displaced, and her jewels reversed, then knowing for certain that it was her husband De Mora who had thus rifled her cabinet, and who had bereaved her of this sweet letter, she absolutely believed it had been the cause of her husband's jealousy, and of her sweet Palura's death.

About six weeks after, he returned home to her from Lisbon, where, in favour of his noble birth and descent, of his many great friends, and a large sum of money, he, in the absence of the viceroy, had obtained his pardon from the chamber of that city; and the very first salutation that he gave his lady Bellinda, was this:

"Strumpet! quoth he, how many
"oraisons hast thou put up to heaven for
"the soul of thy ruffian and adulterer
"Palura?" when, although she was exceedingly galled with this scandalous speech, yet to justify her own honour and innocence, she dissembled her grief for Palura's death, as much as her jealous husband triumphed and insulted thereat, therefore she made this short reply;
"That Palura was not her adulterer, but
"a gentleman of honour, and therefore
"she besought God to forgive him his
"own heinous sin, and execrable crime
"in so basely murdering him."

De Mora nettled with his lady's apology and justification, which knowing to be as false as her, and Palura's crime of adultery was true, he produced the letter to her, then read it, and in great rage and fury, immediately tore and burnt it before her face; now although the sight and knowledge of this letter, also her husband's burning it, did exceedingly vex her, yet she was no way daunted, but again boldly told him, that she could not prevent any gentleman's writing and sending her a letter; and although in the conclusion of it, he had mentioned kisses and embraces, yet she peremptorily vowed and swore, that in the first he had not exceeded the bounds of civility, nor in the last violated the laws of honour; so cunning was she in her answers, and so false and hypocritical in her justification.

Which he well observing, and notwithstanding he was thoroughly convinced of her falsehood, yet all that she said in her defence, was uttered with such a grace, that his own lustful age, still doating on the freshness of her youth and beauty, and seeing that Palura, who was the cause and object of his jealousy, was now removed and dead, he resolved to content himself so far as to endeavour, for the preservation of his honour and his quiet, to bury the remembrance of what was passed in Palura's grave, and allowed her to sit at his table again, and sometimes to share his bed, as if that courtesy would reclaim her lascivious thoughts, and again call home her wanton desires; however he still abridged her former liberty, and debared her the sight of all gentlemen that came to his house.

Bellinda not at all satisfied with her husband's treatment of her, resolved to quit

quit scores with him, and provide herself with another, and not to waste her charms and the flower of her youth in the cold embraces of an old testy jailor, as she accounted her husband De Mora; and so, for want of another, she so far forgot her birth and quality, that she made choice of Ferallo, her own gentleman-usher, a man much about her own age. To him therefore she freely imparted her favours, and he as cheerfully received them.

For three months together Ferallo and his wanton mistress continued their amorous commerce with great secrecy, but at the end of that time, her husband was made acquainted with it by the means of Bellinda's maid Herodia, with whom Ferallo had been very familiar, and on a promise of marriage, had deprived her of her chastity. This wench now seeing herself slighted, and all those endearments, which she thought her own right, transferred to her mistress, was so enflamed with jealousy, that, after having tried all other ways to reclaim his affection, she run open-mouthed to her master with the complaints of his and her own ill usage.

At this unexpected news, old De Mora had his heart set on fire afresh with rage and jealousy, both against his lady and her serving-man Ferallo, he wanted no circumstances to prove their adultery, but believed it as soon as he heard it. Therefore to make short work, without speaking a word either to Bellinda or Ferallo, he at once cashiers him from his house, and in such a disgraceful manner, that he would not let him know the reason thereof, nor allow him an opportunity to see his lady; this was a great grief to them both, but she guessing her husband's intelligence must come from Herodia, likewise turned

her out of doors, and how watchful soever De Mora was over her, she found now and then an opportunity of meeting her paramour, in a close arbour in the garden, where they not only repeated their unlawful caresses, but vowed to be ever faithful to each other, and that they might have nothing any longer to interrupt their joys in this world, they consulted how they might best and soonest dispatch De Mora to the other: which they agreed to be by poison, as the least liable to a discovery; so Ferallo having provided himself with a deadly drug, of slow but of sure operation, Bellinda infused it into some broth that her husband was to take, and which had the desired effect in about two months time, De Mora dying of convulsions in his bowels, without any suspicion of what occasioned it, his lady with wonderful sorrow, to all outward appearance, buried him with all the magnificence that was due to his rank and fortune. Scarce were her husband's ashes cold in the grave, but this amorous widow, to the disgrace of her family, and the grief of her father, took the mean-born Ferallo, to be her lord and master, and publicly married him.

For about six months, this new husband behaved with great respect and affection to his lady, but satiety then making him loath the rich banquet of Bellinda's charms he took up with more homely fare, and became as deeply enamoured of the beauty of a new chamber-maid his wife had taken into her service, named Christalina, as ever he had been of herself. This young woman was about eighteen years of age, tall and slender, of a clear complexion, sweet temper, and as yet unspotted reputation, but alas! how little did this poor unthinking girl know the value

value of these precious gifts. Ferallo was become so fond of her, that a part of the day would not content his lustful desires, but he forgot himself so far, that almost in his lady's sight, he must be with her whole nights without any regard to the woman who had raised him from her own domestic vassal, to be lord of her, and her great estate. But her pride was too great to endure these insults patiently, she vowed she would regain his love, or make him feel her vengeance. Therefore first she tried what kind words and fair intreaties could do, and next resolved to put away her maid, in hopes by that he might put away his affection to her; but in both these she failed, he had no regard to the first, and would not suffer her to do the latter; so far from it, he not only set this maid out of her power, but above it, bringing her to his own table, and preferring her before his wife. "This was a disgrace of so galling a nature, that she disdained any longer to endure it at his hands, and seeing no hopes of his reforming, resolved as she had poisoned her first husband, likewise to murder her second.

Ferallo continually wallowing in his sensual pleasures with Christalina, little dreamed of the bloody banquet preparing for him by his wife, for the first night that he lay in her bed, she provided herself with a keen razor, hid under her pillow, and arising at break of day, when he was asleep, cut his throat, then going out of the room, left him weltering in his gore; but the better to colour over her crime, and make it pass for his own, she took a knife which he usually carried about him, and smearing it with his blood, laid it on the bed-cloaths by him; then taking off the shift she had on, which was stained with

her husband's blood, she wrapped up the razor in it, and a piece of brass the better to make them sink in the water, designing to throw them into a pond; then putting them in her pocket, and shutting the door of the chamber and throwing the key into it, she went down stairs, and calling to one of her maids, bid her fetch her prayer book and attend her to mass, it being about six o'clock; but when she was got about half way, she ordered the maid to go before, and then went to a large pond, near which she met an old soldier, named Roderigo, who made bold to ask alms of her; but being vexed at his coming up to disturb her, she not only refused what he asked, but gave him many harsh words, which so much incensed him, that he went away with much discontent in his countenance, and going a little farther, sat down at the foot of a pine tree, where he could plainly see Bellinda, but she not him.

Bellinda by this time was come close to the pond, where looking about her, and believing no mortal eye beheld her, she threw her bundle into it. Roderigo very distinctly saw the white linnen stained with blood, and considering that this lady might be as unchaste as she was fair, could not help thinking that she had had a bastard, which she first murdered, and then threw into the pond; but resolved to keep it to himself for a while, leaving the discovery of the truth to God and time.

Bellinda now, mass being over, returned home with her maid, and putting a pleasant face on her false heart, she enquired for her husband; her servants told her that they had not seen him yet, but believed he was in bed, whereat she, seeming surprized, sent some of them to see if he was stirring, who finding his chamber

door locked, called aloud, but getting no answer, came and acquainted their lady therewith, who with a feigned surprize run up herself, and called aloud at the door, but no one answering she feigned to be full of fears, and ordered the door to be broke open. By the door being locked on the inside, and his own knife on the bed, they all concluded he had made away with himself, and went to acquaint the corrigadors, of what had happened, who coming to view the body, and considering the depositions of the servants, the young widow was allowed to bury her husband, which was done with great solemnity.

Bellinda thinking all danger over, began to rejoice at her good fortune: but these triumphs were of no long continuance, for the old foldier Roderigo, not forgetting what he had seen, nor the harsh language she had given him, understanding that there was a great dispute between her, and Don Gasper De Mora her first husband's nephew, he thought he might make that occasion not only to revenge himself on her, but likewise to make a friend of Don Gasper: accordingly he went to him and acquainted him with the affair of the pond. Don Gasper soon informed the corrigadors, and taking proper persons with them, attended Don Gasper and Roderigo thither, where after some search, they brought forth the bundle, containing the shift yet stained with blood, the sharp and bloody razor, and the piece of brass,; having examined these, and Don Gasper's malicious curiosity finding the two letters of his aunt's name on the shift which confirmed it to be her's, and knowing that they were thrown into the pond on the very morning that her husband was found murdered in his bed, all these circumstances made it beyond dis-

pute that she was the author of her husband's tragical end: whereupon the corrigadors and their officers, hastened away to her house, and there apprehended her, in the midst of a number of ladies.

The next morning she was sent before the judges, who charged her with murdering her husband Don Ferullo in his bed, which with many tears and oaths she denied; then they shewed her the bloody evidences taken out of the pond, and confronted her with Roderigo, who, as before, affirmed that he saw her fling that bloody parcel into the water. These at first put her into some confusion, but she presently recovered herself enough to make a tedious harangue in justification of her innocence, which her judges paid little regard to, but immediately ordered her to the rack, at the very name of which she confessed the fact, and was sentenced to be burnt alive the next morning.

She was conducted to the place of execution by a nun of St. Clare on one side, and a Franciscan Friar on the other, who exhorted her to disburden her conscience by an ample confession of all her crimes before she died, which she solemnly promised she would, and accordingly when brought to the stake, owned the poisoning of her first husband, for which, and all other her offences she begged pardon of God, and died with all imaginable tokens of a sincere repentance. 25 AP 65

Thus ended the miserable life of the beauteous, but inhuman, lascivious, and bloody-minded Bellinda, and with her dismal story conclude this work, which we hope may deter others from the commission of the like barbarous and shocking crimes, and to make us glorify God for the wisdom of his providence in detecting and bringing them to light.